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A YEAR OF WRECK

A True Story

BY A VICTIM

NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS, FRANKLIN SQUARE
1880

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DEDICATION.

THIS story is dedicated to my much esteemed partner, General Roderic Dhu Dobson. His estimate was slightly incorrect, but there was yet a speculation in the enterprise. I secured a march in time, living in the one year not less than ten; at that rate a man of forty would have lived four hundred years. Whether it was an advantage or not, this book must say, I met the Southern people in a way which but for the Dobson estimate had been impossible. Then in Dobson himself! While not wishing to be understood as meaning that the world is not full of good men, I yet learned that there was one person—and that Dobson—who, take him all in all, for desirable traits—the cap-sheaf of which was fidelity to friendships—you

"shall not look upon his like again."

PREFACE.

Promise, - - - - - - - -	108,000.00
Result, - - - - - - - - -	6,564.27
Deficit, - - - - - - - -	101,435.83

E. & O. E.

The above figures do not mean weights or measures, but solid dollars and cents. Moreover, the account is correct, as any one can learn who will take the trouble to read what follows.

Herein also are to be found the reasons why the wrecks of that superb stream of immigration which flowed into the South at the close of the war mostly drifted back to the North within the year, leaving the stream dry. The situation the first year after the war is the key to the situation since then. This understood, the snail-like progress of that section will no longer cause surprise; and, whilst the reader may say that, simply considering its own interests, the South could not have done worse, it is also charity to remember that with her previous training she could not well have done otherwise. If this story shall have the effect to inspire the good element in the South to assert itself against the lawless, thus hastening the day of substantial prosperity in a region of unparalled natural advantages, it will have accomplished its mission.

A YEAR OF WRECK.

CHAPTER I.

DOBSON'S COTTON STATEMENT.

It was in December, 1865. General Dobson came into our store, with a piece of white paper in his hand and a slightly flushed face.

As ours was a drug-store, and Dobson a physician, I supposed the paper was a prescription for me to fill, and that his flushed face came from the haste he had made from some chamber of dangerous sickness. I reached out my hand for the supposed prescription, and at the same time inquired:

"Liquid or solid?"

"Neither," said he, "but your fortune," still holding the mysterious paper tightly in his hand.

"A short road to wealth," he finally added.

"Let me see what it is," I cried impatiently.

"Not so fast," he replied deliberately. "Let us retire to the privacy of your counting-room and you shall know all."

Our "counting-room" was the back room of the drug-store. It was furnished, for seats, with an old arm-chair and a three-legged stool. The General occupied the arm-chair, while I perched upon the stool. With a near prospect of a "fortune," I became, as is natural, generous, and brought in a bottle of sherry. Two medicine glasses served as wine-glasses. The General was tantalizingly slow. He poured out his wine, fully two ounces, and

toyed with it. This, I afterwards learned, was his wont—never to do any thing in a hurry.

"Harding," he said to me recently, "if you want to be considered an important character, make people wait for you."

Finally he handed me the paper so fraught with our future destiny. It ran as follows:

"*Character of land.*

"Swamp, above overflow; raises from a bale to a bale and a half of cotton to the acre.

"*Price.*

"Seventy-five dollars per acre, one-third cash in hand, balance in one and two years, with interest at eight per cent. per annum.

"*Location, name, and quantity of land.*

"Situated on the Mississippi river; named Hebron; contains 1,100 acres, more or less.

"*Producing following cash results.*

"1,100 acres, at $75 per acre (900 under cultivation, 200 acres in wood), is		$82,500
One-third cash in hand, is	$27,500	
One year's interest on same, at 8 per cent	2,200	—$29,700
56 mules (each mule cultivating 16 acres), at	$150 00	$8,400 00
28 double plows, for breaking land	10 00	280 00
40 single plows, for cultivating land	8 00	320 00
40 sweeps, for cultivating land	8 00	320 00
40 scrapers, for cultivating land.	8 00	320 00
40 harrows, for cultivating land.	8 00	320 00
56 harness, viz.: hames, bridle, collar, trace-chains, and back-bands	7 50	420 00

6½ dozen hoes, at, per dozen.....	$12 00	$ 80 00
2 wagons	120 00	240 00
Complete cost of outfit.....		$10,700 00
One year's interest on same, at 8 per cent...		856 00
Outfit and interest.....		$11,556 00

" Expense, one year.

" 60 freed men.....	$10,800 00
20 freed women.....	2,400 00
25 freed children.....	1,500 00
91 barrels of pork (men, 4 pounds per week; women, 3; and children, 2—350 pounds a week), at $30 per barrel.....	2,730 00
1,209 bushels of corn meal (men and women, 1 peck a week; children, ½ peck), at 80 cents per bushel.....	967 20
598 gallons of molasses (men and women, 1 pint a week; children, ½ pint), at 80 cents per gallon.....	478 40
4 barrels of salt, at $5 per barrel.....	20 00
2,240 bushels of corn, for mules (40 bushels to each mule), at 75 cents per bushel.....	1,680 00
56 tons of hay, for mules (1 ton to each mule)	1,960 00
Medicine, for men and beasts.....	375 00
	$22,910 60
An average of 8 month's interest on same, at 8 per cent	1,221 89
Total expense of one year	$24,132 49

" Receipts.

" 900 acres, minimum estimate, 900 bales cotton, at $120 per bale.....	$108,000 00

"*Outlay recapitulated.*

"First payment on land, and interest	$29,700 00	
Cost of outfit	11,556 00	
Expense, one year	24,132 49	$65,388 49
Receipts, over all outlay...		$43,611 51

"*Analysis, showing practical results.*

"Total cash outlay of $65,388 49, all returned at end of first year; leaving a balance of cash on hand, being receipts over all outlay..... $43,645 00

Crop of 2d year, 900 bales, at $120 per bale.		$108,000 00
Second payment on land.....	$27,500 00	
Interest on same, 1 year, at 8 per cent.....	2,200 00	
Estimate for current expenses, 2d year.....	24,000 00	$53,700 00
Cash profits on hand at end of 2d year...		$54,300 00
Crop of 3d year, 900 bales, at $120 per bale.		$108,000 00
Third and last payment on land.	$27,500 00	
Two years interest, at 8 per cent.	4,400 00	
Estimate for current expenses, for 3d year.....	24,000 00	$55,900 00
Cash profits at end of 3d year.....		$52,100 00

"*Remarks.*

"Thus, it will be seen, the entire cash outlay is returned at the close of the first year, and a net profit of $43,600 51. The second year, after making the second payment on the land, there will be left $54,300; and the third year, $52,100.

"This plantation would have sold readily, before the war, for $125 an acre in gold; and it is reasonable to predict that at the end of, say, the fourth year, it will be

marketable for at least $100 an acre. If we should conclude to sell at that time we would have the following sum to divide:

Fourth crop clear, less $24,000 expenses in working it, say 900 bales	$76,000 00
Eleven hundred acres of land, at $100 per acre	$110,000 00
Mules, plows, and general outfit, worth, say...	7,500 00
	$193,500 00
Which added to the	150,011 57
Previously divided, makes a total profit in the handsome sum of	$343,511 57

The whole cash capital, $65,388 49, which includes interest at 8 per cent., having been returned, at the end of the first year, as before stated.

"The yield is placed at its minimum. Should the crop, in any year, or each year, approach a maximum yield, the profits would be correspondingly increased. At the same time, the estimate of expenses is put at the maximum figure, so that if there are any changes in the result each year, it will be rather in favor of the profit side of the statement than against it."

CHAPTER II.

HOW DOBSON'S STATEMENT IMPRESSED ME.

HERE *was* a fortune—at least a fortune on paper.

I scanned the statement again closely from beginning to end; went over Dobson's additions and subtractions, to see that he had made no mistake—rather in hopes I might find some blunders in what appeared to be his Gibralter of fig-

ures, which I could expose, so as to bring his beautiful edifice tumbling before his eyes; fearful at the same time (such is human nature), that I might do so, and thus break the charmed spell his figures had already woven about me.

Failing to find any flaw in the *results* made by Dobson's figures, I became childish, and commenced a criticism of their shape, the formation of his letters, his punctuation, etc.—as if finding these defective could alter the facts, if Dobson had stated but facts, any more than the value of a white diamond could be changed by its setting, or the flavor of a draught of old Rhenish wine could be changed by its being quaffed from a tin cup, instead of a cut-glass goblet. But even here there was no flaw. Dobson writes a beautiful feminine hand, and his figures are as gracefully turned as the legs of a deer. No fault could be found in the mechanical execution of the paper. Dobson had evidently been an accountant at one time in his life, for there were the red-ink, marks of "pounce," lines that could only have been drawn by the aid of a rule, and it was folded faultlessly. In short, Dobson's statement had n't a flaw in it. Considered simply as a statement, it was a grand success.

Now, I did want to find "a short cut" to a fortune—show me the human being who does not!—and this seemed to be one.

In this mood, I raised my eyes from the statement and met Dobson's looking at me inquiringly. He continued looking at me for a full minute, then he took a sip of wine. Finally, after a lapse of two minutes, during which not a word was spoken, Dobson asked:

"Well, what do you think of the enterprise?"

"It looks well, but can you buy the plantation at the price named?"

Dobson drew from his pocket a letter, which he handed to me, saying: "Read for yourself."

The author was evidently an aged man, for he wrote a tremulous hand. The letter ran as follows:

"————, *December* 6, 1865.

"SIR:—I will sell you my Hebron plantation, situated on the Mississippi river, containing 1,100 acres (900 acres under cultivation, and 200 woods) for $75 per acre, one-third cash, balance in one and two years, in equal payments, which shall bear interest at the rate of eight per cent. per annum. The Hebron plantation is well supplied with cabins, has a steam gin-house, steam saw-mill, steam grist-mill, blacksmith shop, and mule stable, all complete, and in perfect condition. If you contemplate a purchase in the South, should be pleased to see you here.

"Respectfully,

"JONATHAN HAMPSON.

"To General Dobson.

"P. S.—Hebron place is free from overflow, and its yield is a bale to a bale and a half an acre. J. H."

I handed the letter back to Dobson, convinced on the question in point.

"Have you ever seen this plantation? What is the condition of public opinion in its locality? Do you consider it safe for Northern immigration to go there?" I asked.

"I campaigned through that country during the war, and then made up my mind if I came out of the service alive, I would seek a location there; and it is in order to carry out this old determination that I have opened the above correspondence. In answer to your last question, I believe the Southern people to be thoroughly subdued. Their newspapers say they want Northern immigration and capital to settle among them, and I think they should be taken at their word, until we have proof to the contrary. At any rate," said General Dobson, a little proudly, "I assisted in conquering the rebellion; by virtue of the sacrifice of the

blood and treasure of this Nation, our flag floats over every part of the late Confederacy."

"We went into that country once as warriors to conquer a rebellion, and success crowned our efforts; we will now go as peaceful citizens with the plow and the pruning-hook, and I believe success will again come to us. The Southern country needs the regenerating influences of the North. The same element that swept across the Alleghenies, that felled the forests a long way in the direction of the setting sun, that tunneled mountains, that bridged rivers, that has spun a network of railroads throughout the country—that same element is needed in the South. What it has done, and is still doing, for the North, it can—now that free labor when it goes there will not be brought in competition with slave labor—do for the South.

"Coming down to our individual cases—we can not fail. We will not be satisfied with the almost primitive farming utensils now in use in the South; instead of the small plow which turns a furrow only three to four inches in depth, we will use a larger one that will give us a depth of eight to ten inches. We will discard the heavy plantation hoe, which is a load in itself to carry, and use the light steel hoe, with which the laborer can strike five blows, and with more execution each time, to every three with the present one. We will use fertilizers on our lands, and in this way increase the yield to two bales. We will also use labor-saving machinery. Look at the cultivation of corn in the bottom lands here: one farmer with his cultivator easily manages forty acres; with the same machinery, we can easily cultivate twenty acres in cotton, and, in the course of time, as the freedmen learn to handle these cultivators, the quantity of land per man will be increased.

"I tell you, Harding, this is our 'tide,' and we must take advantage of it. There is my adjutant, who comes out of the service broken in health, poor fellow, and with but little in pocket, but with a rich uncle who has promised to

help him, and thinks the South just the place to mend both his health and his purse. He will make a sixth owner if we can get up the enterprise, and his uncle will put the money up for him any day. My uncle, Mr. Joseph Gale, will put in a sixth, as much to help me as any thing, I fancy, though he seems to regard the investment as I do. I will take a third; will you take the remaining third?" I gave Dobson my word that I would, if on visiting the place it met my expectations. We arranged to take our departure within a week, Adjutant Johnson and Mr. Gale agreeing to take our report as their sufficient guarantee.

CHAPTER III.

I BECOME ENTHUSIASTIC OVER IT.

And so Dobson left me a thorough and enthusiastic convert to his scheme—left me repeating to myself: "$343,511.57 profit in four years; one-third of this is $114,503.85, which will belong to me!" And then I took out my pencil and figured that this would be $28,625.96 for each year, or seventy-eight dollars, forty-two and two-thirds cents a day!

I thought of our drug-store, with its gross daily sales amounting to less than $50, from which the stock had to be kept up, the wages of a prescription clerk and an apothecary's boy paid, my partner's and my own daily household expenses met—thought of how, to accomplish this, the walls of our pill-shop claimed me from seven in the morning until nine in the evening, to say nothing of my alternate morning and evening Sunday "watch" of four hours.

I remembered that Dobson, just before parting, had said something about plodding my life away in the drug busi-

ness. Dobson was right; I was plodding my life away. Only an hour before, it is true, our drug store had looked very attractive to me. I had scoured the plate-glass windows my own self, so that they shone like mirrors; I had rubbed down the big show-bottles, with their colored waters, until they glistened in the sunlight and caught the eye of the passer; our soda-fountain I had polished with whitening, as well as the rims of the show cases, so that they had all the luster of a silver dollar fresh from the mint. I had looked over our cash account and found that we had a few hundred dollars in bank and no bills due for over a week. I remember to have had a passing thought that twenty years more in the drug business, as things were running, would give me a fine competency. This would make me a financial success at forty-nine. Seventy-five thousand dollars was then my idea of a competency. It was in this mood that Dobson had crossed my path.

What a revolution his statement had accomplished in me! What a puny, sickly thing our drug-store looked to me now! What! twenty years to secure a competency of seventy-five thousand dollars, when four years will give me one hundred and fourteen thousand and five hundred dollars? As I felt at that moment I would have given away my half-interest in the drug-store had any one asked me for it. What! spend my time dealing out "salts and senna" by the five cents' worth, when an opportunity was offered me to have three dollars and a quarter hurled at me every hour in the twenty-four, or a nickle a minute? Perish the thought!

It was in this mood that our apothecary's boy inquired of me how much Epsom salts he should weigh out for a dime. I replied, "A barrel." I was absolutely ashamed of my business; it looked worse than small to me; it looked *mean!*

I walked along the business thoroughfare on my way to dinner that day, and felt, or imagined I felt, the air of the

city to be stifling. The free air of the country was what I wanted—farm-life, that was the thing. No eighty-acre Western farm either, with its daily drudgery of feeeding pigs and poultry, of being your own stable and plow-boy, and your own milk-man; but I fancied the grand sweep of an eleven-hundred-acre plantation, with a roll of laborers running up in the hundreds; riding on a fine horse, with a broad Panama hat, and a ringing spur, under a Southern sky—that was the poetry of country life, so to speak; that was the country life I had in my mind, and it was that life which was in store for me if Dobson's scheme worked.

I looked into the shop-windows as I passed along and saw the occupants busy with traffic. What a plodding life they were leading, to be sure—wearing their existence away in the dust and noise, and the narrow prison-house of four walls—no "short cut" for them, because there was no Dobson likely to cross their path, as mine had been crossed! No, indeed; such visits as Dobson's seldom come to men!

I passed Mr. Cooper, the great banker, sunning himself in his window. It reminded me of the spider on the outskirts of his net watching and waiting for prey, and I thought what a poor reward he was getting for the use of his money-bags—eight, or, at most, ten per cent. Why, with an outlay of twenty-two thousand dollars, which was to be returned to me within a year, I was to come out of an enterprise at the end of four years the winner of one hundred and fourteen thousand dollars!

CHAPTER IV.

I SHARE THE DOBSON STATEMENT WITH MY WIFE.

I MET my wife standing in the door, shading her eyes from the sunlight with her kitchen apron, on the look-out for me.

She had, with her own hands, prepared my favorite pudding, which must be eaten as soon as it was drawn from the oven, in order to strike it in its prime, and her countenance betrayed a little anxiety, fearing I might be late.

I ate my pudding that day, and whatever else was set before me—at least I presume I did. But if my dinner had been saw-dust, it would have been all the same, so far as the taste went. Man's capacity has its limit, and mine had been exhausted, for the time being, over Dobson's scheme. Dinner then was a mechanical operation. Doubtless a night's rest would restore me to my wonted equilibrium. If this did not, I was in a bad way.

I bethought myself of unbosoming my secret to my wife. It would be a relief to talk it over with some one besides Dobson. She would have to know the whole sooner or later, and woman's instincts are so keen, I reasoned. If what appeared to be Dobson's wheat should after all be but chaff, my wife might find it out and save me ere it was too late. It is true, Dobson had said to me that the idea of looking around while campaigning for a plantation originated with Mrs. Dobson. I knew Mrs. Dobson to be credited with the keenest instinct, and it was, perhaps, presumption to expect that my little wife could discover a flaw in a scheme which Mrs. Dobson had originated, and whose details had undergone her critical inspection! Nevertheless it had before happened that great minds, such as Mrs.

Dobson was always credited with, had overlooked some little minutiæ essential to the success of a measure; it might be so now. This thing which looked so substantial might be only a bubble, which my wife would prick; a mere shadow, instead of substance, which she might discover and dispel. Not that I wished for this result; on the contrary, I would have been vexed at it. I wanted the fairy Dobson castle, Mrs. Dobson architect, to stand as adamant.

So, between the puffs of an after dinner cigar, I shared the Dobson scheme with Mrs. Harding.

Dear, good soul, and ever faithful, after she had heard the whole story, listening with wrapt attention, she answered:

"Well, John, you must be the judge—our home here is delightful, and it will be a little trying to leave our friends and go so far away; but if you think it for the best, let it be so."

There was a slight quiver in her voice, and her hand brushed a something from her eye; but it was only the weakness of the instant, and from that moment the dear little body entered heart and soul into the Dobson scheme.

CHAPTER V.

WE START ON OUR TOUR OF INSPECTION.

Our arrangements for starting on our tour of inspection were complete on the last day of the year, and New Year's day found us on our way to the depot, satchels in hand.

It was a bitter cold day, that first of January, 1866, but what cared we for that? In a few days we should be in the South, basking in its sunshine and warmth.

We passed numerous parties, acquaintances or friends; many of them starting out on their annual round of New-Year calls. I remembered how, a year ago, I had made a day of it. My wife had gently suggested the idea of postponing our departure until the second of January, that I might enjoy it again. Perhaps it would be my last opportunity for many years, she said.

"Does a day later matter?"

"No, a day later does not matter, my dear; but I am in no mood for New-Year's calls," I answered, adding:

"I have entered upon the stern realities of life now, and look upon New-Year's calls and such like as frivolous."

Mrs. Harding had arranged, as was her habit, to "receive," and it was her whim that I should say my good-bye to her in her little reception room, where the table was set with coffee, sandwiches, scalloped oysters, and the usual sweetmeats—a little ruse on her part, I rightly divined, to give me a glimpse of this feature of the New-Year's custom, when she found I could not be induced to take a whole day's view of it.

As I look back upon it now, I feel how I utterly failed to appreciate that moment. But the Dobson scheme wrapt me as in a mantle; it absorbed my every thought; and so, while my wife served me, oh! so tenderly, picking out the largest lumps of sugar for my coffee, selecting the choicest tit-bits from each dish to tempt me; now raising this curtain, now lowering that, in order to improve the lights and shadows of her little paradise; throwing the register wide open, so that the heat came up in great puffs, giving the room a glow of warmth which would be in strong contrast with the biting cold I would encounter as soon as I crossed the threshold of our door; hovering near me, fondly stroking my hair, and cautioning me, over and over again, to be careful how I exposed myself in that Southern country;—while she was showering upon me all these little

tokens of wifely affection, I gulped my coffee, and bolted what she set before me with a manner which plainly said: "See here before you one of the pioneers from the North, taking his life in his hands, and joining that army of adventurous men who are seeking a home in the South; that army which is to build that country anew, causing it to bud and blossom as the rose; that army full of courage, strong in endurance, with money, brains, and with right arms fully capable of becoming the executive officers of that courage, endurance, money, and brains. Picture the return of this army of pioneers—the return of this pioneer in particular, after a four years' absence, with a bank account better by $114,500! Oh, yes, we will accept this little tribute at the moment of our departure. Remember, however, we are on a pinnacle, and from our lofty height you can only expect us to look down upon you, perhaps to give you an absent-minded smile; but, as for entering into your frivolities, impossible!"

CHAPTER VI.

DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER—A GREAT FRIGHT.

At Cairo we found the steamer Mississippi, one of the Atlantic Steamship Company's line, ready to push out for her trip below within half an hour.

On our way to her from the depot we were besieged by runners of rival boats, with a great outcry against her:

"She has tubular boilers, which are almost certain to explode before reaching New Orleans." "Do you want to take passage on such a boat, when a few hours' delay will give

you boats with old-fashioned boilers, which are comparatively safe?" "Better take your coffin with you," said one persistent fellow, "if you go on that boat. Already five out of fourteen of the tubular boiler boats, belonging to this line, have exploded their boilers within a few months, and each one of these explosions has been attended with fearful loss of life and property." "Do you want to enter the jaws of death? If so, this boat is your opportunity."

This and similar talk filled our ears until we had actually crossed the gang-plank and were on the boat itself.

We of course thought it all stuff, if, indeed, we thought any thing about it at the time, except to feel annoyed at the persistence of the fellows; but after we had been out an hour, something recalled the incident, and, on inquiry, we learned that the runners had for once told the truth.

Then we remembered how but recently the wives of two of our townsmen had met with watery graves while on their return trip from visiting the husband of one of them, who was then a cotton-planter near Helena, and how unusually sad the event was, in that neither of their bodies could ever be found. The accident in which they were involved had resulted in great loss of life, but of course these two cases, being those of our own town's-people, had come home to us, so to speak. I remembered how the almost crazed husbands had the river dragged for miles above and below the point where the accident occurred, and offered large rewards for the recovery of the bodies, and I also remembered how, when we had visited our cemetery but recently I had seen newly cut names on the family tomb of each of the bereaved husbands, with the inscription: "Sacred to the memory of ———, the victim of a steamboat explosion on the Mississippi river, Dec., 1865."

On further inquiry, I learned that the ill-fated boat was one of the same line we were traveling on, and, like it, had tubular boilers!

Thus the noisy runners had but stated the truth to us, which our Western stubbornness would not allow us to heed!

But we had, with others, paid our passage money, and were in for it. I scanned the face of the Captain closely. There was no trace of apprehension in it. I looked around among the passengers, particularly those who bore evidence of being veterans in steamboat travel—some were chatting pleasantly, others were engaged in card-playing, many patronizing the bar, *all* apparently at ease. Surely these people must know the situation, and if the danger of an explosion were indeed so great, they would not be so calm and collected, I reasoned.

I tried also to comfort myself with the thought that after all these explosions might not be the fault of the tubular boilers, but the result of unaccountable circumstances; or they might be attributed to careless captains or heedless engineers.

Our Captain, we were told, had been on the Mississippi river twenty years, and never had an accident, and our engineer was said to be A No. 1. Perhaps I was needlessly alarmed. I would try and quiet myself. But, as a measure of precaution, I would get a berth as far away from the boiler as possible. The rear or front part of the boat would put me in the outskirts of the danger, so to speak, in case of explosion, and I would make a critical examination of the life-preserver in my room, to see that it was all right, and have it where I could reach it instantly in the event of danger, even at the dead hour of night.

But either because the boat was crowded, or the clerk was stubborn, my state-room was directly over the boiler, and the steam whistle pipe went up through it. In temperature, it was about a hundred Fahrenheit. No amount of expostulation would effect a change, so there was nothing left but to submit.

An advertisement posted in my room gave this informa-

tion: "The doors and shutters lift from their hinges, and in case of wreck are to be taken off and used as floats."

But what use was life-preserver, or door, or shutter, in case of explosion, to one directly over the boiler? Those in the rear or front might live to make a struggle for the shore with them, but as for me, explosion sealed my doom.

I felt ever so faintly, at that moment, like being back in our drug-store, with no Dobson scheme to divert me, but it was only the weakness of an instant, and I at once upbraided myself for the thought. What had Dobson's scheme to do with tubular boilers? They were the incidents of travel, and were just as likely to be encountered on a journey of pleasure as one of business.

Thus reasoning, I dropped off to sleep. But I was not to be allowed to get through the night without disturbance. I was suddenly awakened by a fearful noise. Something seemed to be screeching up through my state-room with the force of a hundred horse-power. My first thought was of an explosion, and as I listened an instant my ears were filled with a terrific noise, as of rushing steam. Yes, it was an explosion. My time had come. In a twinkle I would be spinning in the air, perhaps torn to fragments. I frantically clasped the door and my life-preserver, when the whistle of the boat sounded hoarsely over my head, followed immediately by the second and third. It was all explained when I could gather my thoughts sufficiently to remember that the steam whistle pipe passed up directly through my room, as already noted.

If the clerk had laid a plot to give me a fright, he had certainly succeeded, and to this day I do not hear of a steamboat explosion without a shudder at the horror I experienced during the moment I have just attempted to describe.

I had another fright, by what the Captain told me next morning was the blowing out of the mud-drums by the aid

of steam. Any one hearing this noise for the first time can not fail to be startled by it.

It seems my fears were not groundless, for two months later this boat did actually explode its boilers, and the poor Captain fell a victim to his first and last accident.

The company continued to lose their tubular boiler boats, until at last, forced by an indignant public, and a conviction that the fault was in the boilers, they had them taken out, and old-fashioned ones put in their places.

This attempt to introduce tubular boilers in the muddy waters of the Mississippi, which had resulted so disastrously to human life and property, was then abandoned, let us hope, forever.

CHAPTER VII.

TOPICS AND CHARACTERS BY THE WAY.

The popular topic on the steamboat was plantation labor.

"Will the black people work, now they are free?"

Most of the passengers were either Southerners or Southern sympathizers, and they, as well as the officers of the boat, who were never slow to speak their minds—always, we noticed, chiming in with the Southern view—loudly asserted there was no work in the negroes, except under the overseer's lash. When we reached Memphis, and saw the landing lined with them, warming themselves under the grateful rays of a January sun, apparently without occupation, the scene was pointed to as the complete verification of this statement.

"Why do n't they go to the country, if there is any work in them?" said the skeptics. "There is a crying necessity

for them on the plantations, with the promise of good wages."

Some one in the crowd replied: "They're waiting for that mule and the forty acres of land the Yankee gover'-ment has promised them."

The author of the remark was a person of swarthy hue, bullet head, small round coal-black eye, thin lip, with the faintest shadow of a mustache, spare in figure, and apparently about thirty-five. He wore no vest, as if the better to display a showy shirt-front, and his pantaloons were held in place by a broad belt, which was fastened with a gilt clasp, on which were the letters "C. S. A." The stranger was in the act of hitching up his pantaloons, which operation disclosed what looked very much like the handle of a knife peeping above the belt's rim; and as he turned around, an instant. later, a gust of wind blew aside the tails of his coat, disclosing a pair of huge pistols.

His feet were very small (he wore his pantaloons in his boots, as if the better to display them). The heels of his boots were as tiny as a woman's, and actually looked overloaded by the weight of the spurs which were fastened to them. These spurs had ugly saw-teeth wheels, fully as large as a silver dollar, and under them were miniature bells, which jingled whenever he moved a foot. When he was not hitching up his pantaloons, he was pulling at his little farce of a mustache, as if trying to hurry it up.

He also had a way of glancing over his shoulder, and when in this act his eye would sometimes betray fear, sometime hatred, as if he either expected to be pursued or had left behind him some deadly foe. Occasionally, when casting these furtive glances behind, there would gleam across his brigandish features an expression which looked like a determination to go back and have it out with some one, and then his hand would quickly find itself under his coat, as if searching for something. This would always be followed instantly by a pallor, as if this determination

involved great danger. He made the remark which attracted my attention with a sneer, which had not left his face when my eyes rested on him.

He was a new-comer, having taken passage at Memphis, accompanied by a man who was in every way his striking contrast. I had noticed the two while they were paying their fare at the clerk's desk, and had instinctively exclaimed to Dobson, "David and Goliah!"

The "Goliah" was indeed a very large man, weighing not a pound less than three of his companion. Every thing about him was simply enormous. Looking at his broadcloth coat, which was frock, had a very long tail, a high collar (which had a rim of at least two inches of grease on it), and flowing sleeves, one would have said it had consumed but little less than a roll of cloth. If any thing had been left, it had certainly been consumed in his pantaloons, which, like every thing else about him, had a baggy appearance. His head was surmounted by a shock of hair, which was allowed to grow long, and which could only be kept under any sort of discipline by the most liberal use of grease. When we first saw him he was evidently fresh from the hands of the barber, and his locks had been tucked under, and plastered down with water and grease, until they formed a huge roll.

Every thing about his face was two sizes above the ordinary, except his nose, which was three sizes. Starting out from the skirt of his hair was a pale rim of red, which gradually deepened, until centering in his enormous nose it had all the color and seedy appearance of a dead-ripe strawberry. His cheeks and double chin hung down in flabby folds, and the barber's soap had brought out the blotches on his face, giving it somewhat the appearance of newly-polished mahogany.

Looking at him from the rear, one would involuntarily think of a huge statue, which had in some way got down from its pedestal. Looking at him from the front, one

would exclaim: "What a living monument to intemperance."

He was being greeted by the Captain, who gave him the title of "General," with the most fulsome praise as to how well he was looking, and with inquiry how long he had been in Memphis, etc., when his companion gave expression to the remark I have just quoted.

He slapped him on the shoulder—causing him to start with a half frightened, half defiant air, as if his imaginary enemy had come upon him, after all his watching, unexpectedly—and exclaimed, with a hoarse laugh:

"Good for you, Southland. From the experience we 've had in Memphis, 'mong them niggers, tryin' to git 'em to go home with us, and gitting nary a one, I reckon you 're 'bout right."

"No, sah, the Chinee 's the man for us; a free nigger is no possible 'count for nothin'. By 'n by, when the Yankee gover'ment gits 'nough of their cussed freedom, we 'll have our niggers back ag'in; till then I 'm goin' for the Chinee." And on that sentiment, the "General" invited all hands to take a drink.

CHAPTER VIII.

DRAM DRINKING.

From what I had already seen, much drinking was the custom of the country, and for any one to decline when invited evoked at least a broad stare from the bystanders, if it did not actually give offense.

The General, looking at me, said: "Come, sah," and so I marched up with the rest to the bar, which was in the

front of the boat, on the side opposite the office, and, as on all Mississippi river steamers, the most prominent feature.

The bar, like every thing else, pandered to the Southern sentiment;—a large engraving of Robert E. Lee was the first object that met the eye in the back-ground. Directly in front of this was arranged the row of bottles containing the various liquors, and on each bottle was a highly-wrought picture of some one of the Southern Generals in full uniform.

"Name your drinks," said "Goliah;" and in the same breath, looking at the bar-keeper, called out "whisky toddy," at the same time drawing his hand across his mouth, as if preparing that receptacle for the rich treat in store for it.

You would have said the party were the veriest epicures, from the different kinds of mixtures they ordered, and how the bar-keeper remembered them all was a wonder.

Southland called for a "whisky straight;" so, when the bar-keeper looked at me, I repeated:

"Whisky straight."

But for the life of me, I did not know what a whisky straight was, although I knew, of course, it must have whisky in it. It was all a venture, however. My impulse was, to order lemonade, but, remembering the season, and fearing this might make the party stare worse than to decline altogether, I said:

"Whisky straight."

Two empty glasses and two glasses half full of ice-water, with a bottle, were set before the two patrons of whisky straight. What to do with them I never could have told, so I resolved to imitate, and when Southland poured out a half tumblerful from the bottle, which I noticed had on it the likeness of Stonewall Jackson, I followed and poured out half a glassful.

He raised his glass to his lips and swallowed its contents as if it were nectar. I did the same with the utmost non-

chalance, flattering myself I was coming off with credit; but, instead of nectar, to me it was rather liquid fire, and I gasped for breath.

Southland deliberately took up his ice-water, and treated himself to a couple of swallows; I seized mine, and frantically attempted to quench the fire raging within me with its full contents.

Conscious that my strange conduct had attracted attention, and with the fire in me only half quenched, I undertook to divert the same; toying with the bottle, I inquired of the bar-keeper:

"Is this Monongahela whisky?"

He instantly assumed an indignant air, and replied:

"No, sah; we don't have any Yankee whisky on this boat!"

I had put my foot into it. While the bar-keeper was yet fuming at what he called an insinuation that he should have Yankee whisky in his bar—the bystanders manifestly in sympathy with him—I was still toying with the bottle which had furnished me the whisky straight, and which the bar-keeper said, with a flourish, was good old Bourbon from Kentucky. Judge my astonishment when I discovered the imprint, "Pittsburgh Glass Company Manufactory," not only on the bottle, but on the border of the picture of Stonewall Jackson itself.

I said nothing, remembering to have read of bar-room scenes on the Mississippi river, but I was strongly inclined to display my discovery for the discomfiture of the bar-keeper, who, even if he was not selling "Yankee" whisky, was selling whisky from "Yankee" bottles.

The taste or quality of the whisky, or both perhaps, had disappointed me, and the quantity I took soon set my head to whirling, until Dobson was fain to suggest, in view of the fact of my having been disturbed in my rest the night previous, I had better take a nap, which I did in my boots, but not until I had dimly seen David and Goliah— or, to

tell the truth in my condition, a dozen Davids and Goliahs—visit the bar twice within eight minutes by the watch.

It was twenty-four hours before that first whisky straight got out of my head, and I resolved, during that time, that this one custom of the South, which I had then seen but a glimpse of, but which I afterwards learned had slain more than plague, pestilence, famine, and battle in that region, should never claim me as its victim.

CHAPTER IX.

MORNING SCENES.

THE third day out from Cairo, found us below Helena, and desiring to see as much of this new life as possible, I was up betimes.

The passengers came out of their state-rooms, one after another, and, with very few exceptions, went directly to the bar and ordered a whisky cocktail. Some called it "a morning nip," others "an eye-opener." "David and Goliah" tumbled out of the same state-room, and took as nearly a bee-line to the bar as their habitual state of semi-intoxication, and the shaking of the boat, would permit—the former seeming, in his greed for drink, to be oblivious for the moment of his imaginary foe in the rear, never once looking over his shoulder, but still continuing to either hitch up his pantaloons or tug at his mustache.

They ordered—"the usual."

But I noticed, however indefinite the order, the barkeeper seemed to understand it as all meaning the same thing, and so it was, with the exception of a couple of

"swell" looking chaps, who turned out to be three-card-monte dealers, who ordered "soda cocktails."

It was a study to witness this morning's operation. I had seen, in my experience of country life in the North, the sturdy farmers taking their long and invigorating draughts of water fresh from the well, the first thing after they were up in the morning; that seemed perfectly natural; I had myself enjoyed it with the keenest relish, drinking from the gourd or tin-cup hung either at the well-side, or over the bench just outside the kitchen door. But here was a different scene. There was the silver cooler at the head of the boat, there was the silver cup from which to drink, but no one visited this fountain of health. In this morning's hour, cooler and cup were simply show figures, if they were not indeed something to be shunned, while the bar, with its poisonous drinks, was the one recognized attraction.

The visitors to this shrine would go up in shoals. There seemed to be a general understanding that it was not the thing to drink alone. Once only during the morning was this rule varied.

Some would take their cocktails much as a hungry dog snatches at a bone, others would sip it daintily as if they wished it might last forever. Sometimes the countenance would light up as if the draught had infused new vigor, and sometimes it would give the face the expression given by a nauseous dose of medicine. But it always seemed to have the effect of stiffening the back-bone. After the drink, you would see the person either pull his vest down or his pantaloons up, or shake his coat collar, or straighten up, or make some little manuever which plainly said, "now, I am all right."

While "David and Goliah's" cocktails were being mixed, the latter said, as if indulging in reminiscence:

"Well, Southland, times ar' n't as they used to be 'fo' the

wa'. Then we used to drink champagne cocktails all the way to New Orleans; now we have to put up with whisky cocktails."

"Yes," replied Southland, swallowing his drink, "that 's what the radi*cals* of the No'th have done for us."

And then he glanced over his shoulder more fiercely than ever, while his coal-black eyes almost emitted sparks of fire, and his hand seemed determined to find that something under his coat.

"We ought to love this Yankee gover'ment, we had," said he.

Again glancing over his shoulder, I noticed a changed expression. "Never mind," he continued, "Andy Johnson is with us now. He 's gone back on the cussed radi*cals*, and through him we 'll git all we lost by the wa'."

"I reckon you 're 'bout right thar; Andy 's showin' them fellers up No'th a sure 'nuff Yankee trick. If he 'll take away that cussed nigger bureau, and the Yankee troops at its back, we 'll show the nigger what freedom is."

"He 'll do it, sure," said Southland. "He says he 's a Moses, and when Andy Johnson says a thing, he means it, he does."

Now the breakfast bell sounded, and here we found a feature of Southern steamboat travel that was commendable: the utter absence of any rushing, or pushing, or scrambling for seats at the table. Not a passenger on the boat was in a hurry to take his meal. It seemed to be understood that there was an abundance of every thing cooked, and that plenty of time would be given to eat it. Here was an example for steamboats and railroads elsewhere, which they would do well to follow. We were as free from annoyance as we should have been at some first-class hotel or restaurant, where meals are served at all hours, thus rendering any hurry or scramble unnecessary. The steward's manner plainly said to you, "gentlemen,

take your own time," and the waiters had an easy gait and an air which assured you that there was no lack of good things behind, but that the late comers would, if possible, be better served than the early ones.

I placed my ticket beside my plate at the first meal I took on the boat, but no one called for it, no one offered to "punch" it, and so I stowed it away and have it yet as a memento of that eventful journey. Indeed, there was an utter absence of every thing which would have a tendency to remind you that you were paying for what you got, a complete absence of any surveillance, which rather made you feel that you were a complimentary guest; at least you felt that whether you paid or not seemed to be a matter of perfect indifference to the officers of the boat.

CHAPTER X.

"DAVID AND GOLIAH."

THE steward was an inveterate gossip. He knew everybody and his antecedents.

The big man we have nick-named "Goliah" was General Parker, of Louisiana. He was an extensive planter, and had, notwithstanding his size, won his title of General by active field service in the Confederate army.

He was an enormous drinker, and this he had been as long as the steward could remember. Even before the war he was one of the inveterates, but then drinking was done in a more aristocratic style. In those days champagne was the rule, and it used to run, on the steamboats, free as water. The steward had heard that General Parker drank a barrel of whisky once since the war in sixty days.

He was drinking at least half a gallon a day now; so this statement did not surprise me in the least.

"Is he married?"

The steward looked cautiously around, to see if any one was in hearing distance, and then replied in an undertone: "No; but he has quite a family of children by one of his slave women."

I expressed great astonishment at this, but the steward said, with a shrug of the shoulder: "You 'll have to get used to that, if you live in the South."

Southland had been, for the most part, a guerrilla during the war, though for a short time he had acted as conscript officer. His record was appalling.

He had hunted conscripts with bloodhounds, the same class of dogs that had been used to bring back runaway slaves; and in the section of country where he had carried on this inhuman practice he was known as "dog Southland."

It was in a region which had outwardly given its adhesion to the Confederate government, but where, secretly, Union sentiments were entertained by the people. They had voted almost solidly against secession, and when the war actually came on had been slow to volunteer. It was from their class in the South that the rank and file of the army was to come—that known as the "poor white trash," which the steward explained to mean the non-slaveholding laboring class. Here Southland had been put to work. The people had their favorite hiding-places, and would signal his coming, and fly to their retreats. So, when Southland would ride up to a house and inquire for the man, he was not at home. Then he would put his hounds on the track of the absent one, and in this way he got many recruits, some of them coming into camp torn and bleeding. Once, while on his rounds, he was met by the usual answer, "not at home," when, riding on a short distance, he found his dogs "trailed" to the foot of a tree, howling forth their bloodthirsty peals. Hiding in its

branches he espied a boy. He deliberately raised his shot-gun from the pommel of his saddle, and emptied the contents of one barrel in the little fellow's head, and he fell a corpse in the midst of the pack of hounds, which instantly set upon him, tearing the flesh from his body.

Southland ordered the dogs off, and then told one of his men to hand him "the little squirrel."

"You 'll never watch out for your daddy ag'in," said he, as he raised his shot-gun, so that the man could throw the mangled corpse over the pommel of his saddle.

"Now, I 'll take you home to your mammy." And then he galloped off. Reaching the front gate, he threw the object of his passion over into the yard, saying to the mother, who rushed to grasp her little one, mangled by the teeth of the dogs almost beyond recognition, "There, take your brat, and never try hiding your husband ag'in."

This was one of the numerous stories of horror which the steward told me about this man.

Since the war he had shot a man in the back, a brave Confederate army officer, and one in every way a gentleman, as he was going past him, without any more warning than calling out to him, "Look out, there," and the next instant firing—all over a dispute involving a few dollars!

I no longer wondered that a man with such a record should be constantly glancing over his shoulder.

There were others on the boat besides the steward who seemed to be perfectly familiar with Southland's record, and yet he was a hale fellow among them all. The worst that was said of him was, "That dare devil;" and in speaking of one of his numerous murders, it was, "Poor fellow; he deserved a better fate." Not a word in condemnation of the murderer!

Was this Southern society? It certainly was Southern steamboat society.

To say nothing of his crimes committed in the name of the Confederacy, here was an acknowledged murderer run-

ning at large! From his manner it was evident that the voice of nature, his conscience, was constantly crying out against him, and yet he was allowed to associate with honest and innocent men—his deeds, which his own conscience were thus incessantly condemning, rather the subject of applause in the section of country where they had been committed. And while his own heart was pronouncing him "guilty," neither public opinion (at least as indexed on the boat), nor court, nor jury, were rendering any such verdict. This man was not merely suspected of these crimes, which might justify a suspension of public opinion until they had been proved, but he was known to have committed them, and yet this Southern steamboat society said to him: "Eat with us, drink with us, you, the murderer—you, the slayer of men and children, and perhaps of women—place yourself on a perfect equality with us."

CHAPTER XI.

AN UNPLEASANT DISCOVERY.

We were not long in finding out that we were by no means the only persons on the boat seeking a location, and it was said that both the rail and water conveyances for the South were swarming with what Goliah termed "Yankee adventurers," who, as he expressed it, "are coming down South to buy our homes right out from under us," which statement Southland confirmed, saying:

"That 's so, for a fact."

On our boat, among others, was a Mr. Johnson, from Indiana, who had been engaged in the manufacture of en-

gines for the Southern trade before the war, and had, he said, a large amount of money outstanding.

He at first gave us to believe that he was making the trip to try and collect some of this money, but finally acknowledged that he intended stopping to look at one or two plantations, with a view to purchase, and that he had previously dispatched an agent, who was now on the ground making the preliminary examination.

I then confided to him that we, too, were on our way to look at a plantation, with a view to purchase, in the very neighborhood he had mentioned, and told him the name of the place. I noticed he gave a little start, and immediately pulled out a memorandum-book, which he consulted, exclaiming:

"One of the two plantations my agent writes about!"

Here, then, was likely to be competition. The purchase of the Hebron plantation was not, after all, to be so easily accomplished!

It was by no means unlikely that it would slip from our grasp. Johnson had his agent on the ground; that was a great advantage. He might, for aught we knew, be simply going down to pay over the purchase-money, the purchase itself having already been consummated by the agent. From remarks which he dropped, and from his general manner, I was led to infer that he had the most ample means, and he might want both places.

Fearing it to be so, I timidly asked him this question.

"No, indeed, I have no idea of that. If I buy at all, it will be as a venture for some friends and myself, and the agent now down there will take charge of the place. The fact is, the purchase will be made, if made at all, as much to put this agent in the way of making money as any thing. He is a faithful man, and has been in our employ for a long time. This is to be his reward."

All this was, however, simply an assurance that he intended to purchase but one place. Suppose that "one"

should turn out to be the place we were now making a journey to "view," and, if we were so inclined, to possess. Nothing could, of course, prevent us from "viewing" it, but it would probably be as the property of another.

With an agent who was now "on the ground," Johnson might, beyond a doubt, pluck the prize.

Then, too, notwithstanding his assurance that he had no "idea" of purchasing both places, suppose this "agent," who possessed the unbounded confidence of his master, should, as was not unlikely, have some discretionary power, and seeing the magnificent financial prospect, and fearing to brook delay, should actually close the bargain for both places, trusting to Johnson to ratify the same, and, from his intimate knowledge of his employer, knowing that he would be only too glad to do so—that, rather than blame him for the purchase, he would blame him if he allowed the bargain to slip from him.

So there was a poor show for a chance to test the "Dobson scheme," at least on that particular plantation. We might, if Johnson's agent should only close for one of the two places, take the other, even if that other was not the one Dobson had chosen; but of course Dobson's choice was the cream of the neighborhood, and any thing else would be number two. What a pity we had not started a month earlier,—then we might have flanked Johnson, as he was now likely to flank us. Well, we would see how it ended. I might be borrowing trouble. And in this mood I said good-night to Dobson, who assured me that the morning would find us at our journey's end.

At last we are in the immediate neighborhood of our Mecca. But neither the elements, the hour, nor my feelings are auspicious of a favorable impression.

One of those dense fogs is settling down upon the country, and as I station myself upon the guards to watch for the landing, it seems to penetrate every pore of my body. The boat is constantly sounding its fog-whistle, and ever

and anon the pilot's bells are heard conveying their messages to the engineer below, telling him to start this wheel, to stop that one, now to slow down on both, now to let her drift, etc.

The Captain stands at his post, shading his eyes with one hand, peering into the distance as if he would break through the mist, and holding on to the rope of his bell with the other hand, ready to signal at an instant when he may discover danger ahead.

The effort to land a boat in a fog is in itself exciting, but it is half an hour before day-break, and I feel dull and sleepy; and so, while the officers of the boat are all on the alert, and I hear the sounding of the whistles, the ringing of bells, and all the attendant commotion, I shake myself closer under my wrappings, as if I would shut out the scene; I pull my collar over my ears, as if I would close them from the sounds.

Is this the balmy South? Why, this cold penetrates my marrow, and then, while the boat is still struggling in the fog, all shivering, I again enter the cabin to get a little of its warmth before stepping on the shore.

There are Southland and Parker hanging over the bar, guzzling, guzzling away at the fiery liquid. There are the monte-dealers plying their vocation on a couple of Texas-looking fellows, and there, too, is the inevitable poker-party, each one of whose faces is in itself a study.

I pull my hat over my eyes to shut out the spectacle, and then, as I have nothing else to look at, I look within, and in my mood think of the home and friends I have left behind. If I were there now this would have been my weekly whist-party night. Should we ever find here, if this were to be our home, any thing that could take the place of those gatherings of choice acquaintances?

To-morrow would be a meeting of our insurance directory. There would be a vacant chair in a board of which I had been a member since its birth. Would those solid

men have a moment's thought of me, who had stood shoulder to shoulder with them until a little enterprise had become a controling one in its line. Then, too, there was our bank dividend, a notice of which I had seen in the morning paper the day we left—"six per cent., semi-annual, payable on and after January 5th" (yesterday). I had been looking forward to be in the board of directory of this bank at no distant day, I remembered.

There were some coupons, State and United States, due the 1st of January, which in my absorption in the "Dobson scheme" I had neglected to cut off and place in bank for collection. They, with my bank dividend, must sleep until my return. Should we ever find another such pastor as the one to whose ministrations we had long been indebted? Could we leave the old family physician?

I had noticed, in the Memphis papers, New York quotations, showing the sudden fall of quinine. Would my partner take advantage of this, and lay in a supply? And so my thoughts ran on until they drifted back to Johnson's statement, which had so upset me, and which was really at the bottom of my present slight tinge of disgust.

Yes, if I were only certain that Johnson was not in our way, I might be happy, despite the weather or the hour.

And then our boat struck something, and Dobson slapped me on the shoulder, saying:

"Wake up, Harding, we are at the wharf."

CHAPTER XII.

AT THE LANDING—FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

We crossed the stage plank to the wharf-boat, by the light of the steamboat torch, and were cordially greeted by a wide-awake looking personage, lantern in hand, saying:

"Glad to see you, gents; walk this way—right up stairs. Plenty of room; good accommodations. Take seats, gents, by the fire. You, Pompey! take the gen'men's kearpet bags. Hurry up thar, nigger. Beds, gents, beds?"

No, it was so near morning it was hardly worth our while to go to bed; with his permission we would sit by the fire.

"Certainly, gents, certainly. Pompey, make a rousin' fire to keep the gen'men warm—lively, nigger! Breakfast at seven, gents; good, warm breakfast. Make yourself perfectly at home, gents, perfectly at home. Lively times for freight. Lots of new men coming into the country. That's what we want: the more the merrier. Plenty o' land here; plenty o' niggers. Yankee capital, and Yankee enterprise is all we want. Excuse me, gents. This is my watch; I must go and receive the freight."

And so our host bustled out, saying: "You nigger! don't let the gen'men want for nothin'."

We made out the wharf-boat to be a dismantled steamboat, and could see that the post-office occupied one corner of the cabin. The host had spoken of "good accommodations," "beds," and "breakfast," so we inferred that it also was serving the purpose of hotel. The host soon came blustering back. Did he know Jonathan Hampson, we asked.

He knew Gen. Jonathan Hampson, late of the Confederate Senate at Richmond.

We presumed he was the gentleman we wanted to see. Was he at home?

He had just returned from a two weeks' absence in New Orleans, had come up in the night, and had gone to bed on the boat. His "boy" would be in for him about day light; he would be up shortly.

Oh, I thought, Hampson has been absent for two weeks; Johnson's agent has not seen him then, and there is an even chance for us.

I at once became light-hearted, and the "Dobson scheme" again assumed its original mastery.

While I was yet enjoying the thought, a cabin door opened and a fine-looking, silvery-haired old gentleman stepped out. The host bustled up at once, exclaiming: "Gents, this is Gen. Hampson," and, looking at the newcomers, he continued:

"General, here are some gen'men who have been inquiring for you."

Dobson performed the ceremony of introduction on our part in his best style, and in turn Gen. Hampson introduced our host as "Capt. Tyler, late of the Confederate army."

Dobson made an engagement for us to call on the General at nine that morning at his house, a mile distant.

"I would send for you, but have no means of conveyance whatever; you will have to make your way out to my residence as best you can. Once there, I will try and mount you in some way for a trip to the Hebron plantation." Then the General asked us if our journey down the river had been pleasant. Was the weather cold when we left the North? A few such questions made up the sum total of the conversation, which partook of the dullness of the hour.

Day at last broke, and the General was off. As the host showed him to the door, he said something to him in an undertone, looking in our direction, and I caught the

words "favorable impression," to which Capt. Tyler nodded a reply, in turn looking at us. I judged it to be a request to make our stay pleasant, and to do what he could to give us a favorable impression of the country.

It was plain to be seen, by the great deference Capt. Tyler showed the General, that he considered him an important personage, and as the morning wore on, and the village loungers dropped in, apparently to take a morning drink, there being a bar on board which they generally patronized, the manner in which they all spoke of him convinced us that he was in fact the chief man of the neighborhood. Capt. Tyler was officious in introducing us to the morning callers. It was quite evident that the object of our journey was well understood. For aught I could see we were welcome. I noticed the expression of each new face as we were presented, and was unable to see any thing that looked like hostility. We had expected a cordial enough reception on the part of Gen. Hampson, as we had a letter of introduction to him. He was originally from the North, and received his education there. Drinking in the healthy Northern ideas with his schooling, we had naturally expected to find a man with liberal views, and with no particular prejudices.

If there was to be any hostility toward us, I thought it would come from the native Southerners—those who had never seen any thing of the North, except what they might have observed in a hurried trip through it, and judged of it by this, and the sensation newspaper reports which they read. Of course, wherever we found a man who had been educated in the North, as I knew Gen. Hampson had, we would find a man of enlarged ideas and views.

True, I remembered to have heard it said, that the bitterest men in the South were those of Northern birth and education; but this did not stand to reason, and so I had discarded the idea as unworthy of belief. However, we

would have a chance to prove this statement if we came South to live.

Among many others, we were introduced to two gentlemen who were born, educated and prepared for a profession—one for that of medicine and the other that of law—in Boston. Another, whose birth-place was New York, had drifted South after his maturity, and, by a lucky marriage to the daughter of a rich planter, had become a planter, and wealthy himself.

"Keen as a brier," Tyler had whispered in my ear after this introduction.

The doctor said, laughing: "I hope you won't think any the worse of me on account of my birth-place. I have long since been forgiven for that!"

They had all lived in the South for over twenty years, and I could see at a glance that they were the leaders in their little circle.

If my theory was correct that a Northern education made liberal minds, we had certainly struck a liberal neighborhood, and at this, my first glance, I could see nothing to the contrary.

Capt. Tyler overpowered us with attention, and when the hour came for us to start out to meet our engagement he detailed Pompey to show us the way.

The fog had lifted, and the sun was shining brightly, and my spirits were buoyant at the thought that we were shortly to look upon the Hebron plantation.

I laughed at the little scare which Johnson had given me yesterday, and my gloomy thoughts of the early morning. I had been a trifle home-sick, but the pleasant people we had met, the charming morning and all—well—this was the sunny South. So far I had seen no great cause to turn back since I had put my hand to the plow.

Pompey led us by numerous hillocks in the levee which he told us was where "De Union so'g'ers was buried"—by a big camp, where hundreds of Irishmen were building

a new levee, and so on until we came to a hedge-row of rose-bushes, which he said was "Hambleton, where Gen. Hampson lives," and told us to go "right ahead and you'll come to de Gen'l's house, a-n-no mistake." We dropped a piece of money in Pompey's palm, and, thanking him, said we would make our way for the rest of the distance without his help.

CHAPTER XIII.

HAMBLETON.

HAMBLETON had evidently been a beautiful place; that we could see as we traversed the broad avenue leading to the house. But every thing had a neglected appearance. The Bermuda grass had crept into the avenue itself, until almost all trace of the road was obliterated. What a wilderness of rose-bushes there was, look in whatever direction you might; but the grass had matted itself about their roots, and the untrained branches had shot out, from year to year, and coiled around each other, until they had sprawled all over the ground, giving it and themselves the most untidy appearance possible.

Dobson pointed out to me the grand magnolia, with its thick, glossy, green leaf; and there were, also, the less pretentious members of the same family. The laurel mundi, cape jessamine, oleander, and many other semi-tropical trees showed themselves at every turn. There were the spirea, flowering shrubs, crape myrtles, pomegranate, althea, etc., all in the greatest profusion. There, too, was the box-alder, the maple of the South; the hackberry, the counterpart of the beach-tree; the sweet gum, closely resembling the oak of the West; the live oak, so beautiful

always with its perpetual coat of green; the china tree, loaded with its cream-colored berries, which the robins were at that moment gathering, as they hopped from bough to bough, and which, Dobson said, they would continue to eat until some of the little gluttons would actually become drunk, and in this condition flutter helplessly at your feet. There were the pecan trees, of all sizes, from those tall and powerful with age, to the little estray, which had only the year before sprung out of the grass from the kernel of the nut which some bird had dropped in its flight. There were those first pledges of the spring-time, the narcissus, the jonquil, the hyacinth, already in blossom, too, studding the dead grass with their bright colors, and forming borders to walks which branched off in every direction—now to this summer-house; now to that rustic seat under a broad, spreading tree; now to a long building, which we afterwards learned had been set apart for billiards and bowling; and now to a path which led down to the lake. Here and there we could see evergreens of the pine and cedar families, but what a dull hue they had, compared with the magnolia, the live oak, etc. Over all, and around all, was that air of neglect: shrub and tree, rank with growth for want of the pruner; bulbs, blossoming singly, for lack of fresh earth, and because the Bermuda roots were holding them as in a death's grip. Every-where was an alarming growth of wood, and bark, and fiber, of course at the expense of the flower. Every-where nature was allowed to run riot, and she had taken advantage of her opportunity, showing, wherever the eye rested, the wonderful richness of the soil in which she had to work.

The grass in the walk; the matted coils of rose-bushes; the bulbs with their single blossoms; the massive gate-posts, which stood like silent sentinels at the entrance, minus the gate; the absence of any fence, save the overgrown hedge-row of Cherokee rose and privet; that tree actually covered, so that you could not distinguish its kind, by the enormous

weight of the honeysuckle which has run up its sides to its uttermost branches, and then dropped down and repeated its growth over and over again, until it is almost a compact ball of honeysuckle vine; that summer-house and billiard-room, dingy for want of paint—all these told their story of years of neglect.

There were also signs of the destroyer's hand; here was a clump of trees, badly barked, and the limbs were pulled down, as if they had served as hitchings for horses—indeed, there were marks of their hoofs to be seen underneath. Soldiery had been at work in more places than one, you saw, if you took a closer look as you passed along. The grass was scarred in places, and there were signs of tents, and here you saw some broken glass, telling its story of drink. But was it not a little wonderful that a Confederate senator had got off with so little damage to his grounds, especially in view of the fact that a very large force of our army had been encamped in the immediate neighborhood for months? What was the secret of his escape?

We approached the house from the left, and there, in plain view, was one of those numerous "cut-offs" of the Mississippi, which are called lakes. The grounds stretched on beyond, looking just as attractive, as far as we could see, as those we had passed through.

It was a charming sight—the morning sun on the lake, dew-drops shining on the dead grass, the lights and shadows under the trees. In the rear stood a plain basement-story frame country residence.

The house was manifestly not in keeping with the grounds. I had expected a fine old English mansion of massive stone, which would have completed the picture. I did not then know the difficulty of getting building material together here; I did not know that any thing beyond brick or wood for house-building was not to be found in this portion of the Mississippi delta; that nature had

not left on its surface, or in its bowels, a stone as large as a walnut; that in fact all her wonderous wealth had been lavished on the soil, which had produced the enormous growth scattered all about us—a soil which was just as productive a hundred feet below as it was on the surface.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HAMBLETON OCCUPANTS.

We were admitted to the Hambleton residence by a negro man, who bore the marks of intelligence in his face, and were told to follow him up stairs, where his "marsa" then was.

General Hampson, now the host, greeted us with dignified cordiality, and, turning to the negro, said:

"This is James, who was the devoted servant of my family during the war."

Just then a large, fine looking negro woman came into the room with some glasses for the side-board.

"This," said the General, "is Sarah, who, with James, remained here in charge of this property, buried our silver and other valuables, when the Federal army came, and, though threatened, refused to divulge their whereabouts, thus saving them to us uninjured. These two, by their tact and management, though my house was used as a hospital, succeeded in saving us from any serious damage."

Here was a frank acknowledgment of valuable services rendered. These two faithful negroes, then, had saved the property from harm, and this was the explanation of its good condition.

"Gentlemen, what do you say to a whisky-toddy before riding, as a brace for the shaking-up before us? I will have to mount you on mules. Before the war there was an abundance of fine carriages and horses here; now if there is a buggy in the county I do n't know where it is."

Dobson did not seem to want to object to the toddy, and I did not dare to; in fact, the side-board looked very inviting, with its decanter and glasses, flanked by sugar-bowl, a tumbler of spoons, and the water-pitcher, so I marched up to it like the others.

A whisky-toddy is perhaps the same the world over. In the South it is mixed as follows: A glass in your left hand, and a spoon in your right, with which take two square lumps of sugar and put in your glass; leave the spoon in the glass, holding its handle between the first and second fingers, the glass being held between the thumb and two last fingers. Lift the pitcher with the right hand, and, holding the glass on a level with your eye, pour in enough water to fairly cover the sugar; set the pitcher down, and take the spoon in your right hand again, and with its bowl gradually crush the lumps of sugar as they become saturated with water—this until no trace of the sugar is left. Then comes the whisky, which is poured in the same manner as the water. Grasp the spoon again with your right hand, and lift the liquid up in its bowl, letting it fall back until it is thoroughly mixed, which is evidenced by a little bead forming around the edge of the glass. You then transfer the glass from the left hand to the right, holding it as directed when pouring in the water and whisky. Then comes the drinking.

While the toddy is being mixed some one should tell a story. In this way attention is diverted now by this one stopping to listen, now that one, so that all are not diving into the sugar-bowl at once, or demanding the pitcher or decanter at the same instant. Dobson was a great success in this line. He understood the whole thing to a nicety,

and led off at once with a charming little Potomac incident, which was exceedingly *apropos*, as our host happened to know both parties :

"A Bishop was visiting the camp of our regiments in the ninety-days' service, near Washington, and was a guest of the General then in command. This General was very fond of his whisky-toddy, but was afraid to indulge in it in the presence of the Bishop ; but, finally, becoming very thirsty, in a fit of desperation, he asked the reverend gentleman if he would not like a glass of tuscanuggy with him.

"'What is tuscanuggy?' inquired the Bishop, with his deliberate tone of voice and distinct pronunciation.

"'Tuscanuggy?—why, tuscanuggy is a little sugar, some water, and—and—a very little good *old* whisky—just a drop, you know, Bishop, to warm it up ; a good thing, Bishop, these damp nights,' blurted out the General, as if astonished at his own presumption ; and then he looked into the Bishop's eye, anxiously, to see if his shot had struck.

"'Well, General, if you think it a good thing, I will take some tuscanuggy with you.'

"So the General, only too delighted, mixed it up, and after it had been drunk inquired of the Bishop how he liked it.

"'Your tuscanuggy is very good, General—very good.'"

There can be no mistake about the above recipe for whisky-toddy. It was the result of twenty-years' practice on the part of Hampson, and any one contemplating a location in the South should study it carefully, and thus save himself the mortification I experienced in not being posted as to how the thing was done.

I tingle with shame, even now, as I remember what fearful blunders I made, pouring the water into the glass before the sugar, then grasping at the lemonade sugar-crusher, when I should have coaxed the sugar to melt with my spoon, and getting my drink ready before Dobson had his two

lumps of sugar in his glass. I was n't quite a boor, I thought, but I showed myself to be the veriest one on this occasion.

It was quite evident that Dobson's manner of handling a whisky-toddy had completely captivated General Hampson.

As for me, I belonged to the awkward squad.

James announced Mr. Johnson and his agent, and was told to show them up.

Then followed whisky-toddy No. 2.

Mr. Johnson simply called to know at what time tomorrow Gen. Hampson would be disengaged, and the hour of ten was named. He was shown a beautifully executed map of the plantation his agent had been looking at, and told the price of it was $110,000, and then Mr. Johnson and his agent took their departure. Nothing was said about his having his eye on the place we were to look at, so I considered the coast clear for us.

Our outfit was ready, James said, and then Mrs. Hampson coming in, we were presented to her, and received at her hands an invitation to dinner that day. In answer to our compliments bestowed upon their grounds, she replied:

"Yes, it was pleasant before the war. I felt I could look out upon a beautiful picture; nothing was lacking but the hills, and we used to imagine the forest which you can see beyond the lake to be hills, and then the picture was complete. In those days not even a blade of grass wanted for attention. Now you can see the walks and every thing are suffering for want of it."

CHAPTER XV.

OUR JOURNEY TO THE HEBRON PLANTATION.

We found, on descending, a primitive outfit, to be sure. There was one pretty fair-looking horse with accouterments. This was Hampson's saddle animal, which he had picked up in Mexico on his flight there after Lee's surrender, and which had brought him back home when word was sent him that the United States' Government was not injuring a hair on the head of a single Confederate leader. This he proceeded to mount. Then there were the skeletons of a horse and a mule; and such saddles! Well, I have seen thousands of them since: they are a peculiarity of the South, and I am used to them now; but at that time they struck me as being exceedingly crude—no two buckles of the same size or make, no two pieces of leather of the same kind, stirrups of different patterns, saddle-frames with the leather rotted away; every scrap of leather in the two outfits, and the frames themselves, were but scraps, with great ugly cracks in them for want of a few drops of oil at the proper time—this piece torn away and fastened with a strip of deer hide, that piece secured with a piece of tow-string, others held together by the aid of a piece of whang-leather. Such was the general make-up of the saddles. The saddle-blankets were gunny-sacks. The mule had a piece of a blind-bridle, and the horse an equally dilapidated piece of riding-bridle. There was but one thing which could be said in favor of the sorry outfit: horse, mule, saddles and bridles were all in keeping.

Was this the farm-life my fancy had pictured—the fine horse, the ringing spur, etc? Never mind, if we came here to live we should revolutionize all this!

Hampson said, "Take your choice, gentlemen;" so, with the best intention in the world, I insisted that Dobson should mount the horse (it seems the poor thing had a sore back, and he struggled mightily), which he did after much effort. I had to hide my face in my handkerchief to save me from an explosion at the ridiculous spectacle he presented. His dress was faultless, which brought out the dilapidated condition of the horse to greater effect; and, in turn, the horse's seedy appearance rendered Dobson's fine feathers more conspicuous. The effort of mounting had thrown his black silk hat upon the back of his head, and made him very red in the face; then, too, one stirrup was about three inches shorter than the other, giving him the position assumed on a velocipede in motion, while both face and hat looked very much as they naturally would at the close of a tight race on that vehicle. The righting of his hat was the work of an instant, though I fancied it was done a little petulantly, and he soon regained his natural color; but it took some time for James to "tinker" the stirrups so that one leg should not be dangling while the knee of the other showed itself over the pommel of the saddle.

We finally got ourselves in motion, but Dobson's first effort to put his beast out of a walk came very near bringing it down on all-fours, and shot him forward upon the horse's neck, again throwing his hat to the back of his head, and again giving him a very red appearance in the face. The animal was an inveterate stumbler, and as often as he could be surprised into any thing beyond a walk, by dint of spur and peach-limb, so often was he sure to pitch Dobson to the front—once or twice so violently as to cause the breaking of the rotten saddle-girth and rendering a halt for repairs necessary. Dobson had evidently made a water-haul, for beyond the discomfort of a hatchet-back, which insisted on shoving itself up through the saddle, and a gait which rendered the steady use of a peach-limb and my

heels against the sides of my mule necessary to keep within hearing distance of Hampson, I got along very well. Hampson kept the lead and saw little or nothing of Dobson's discomfort, except when we halted to fix the saddle-girths, which he said would have been very mortifying before the war.

Hampson pointed out every thing of interest as we rode along. "Do you see the game on the lake? There are ducks and geese in abundance in the season, with the woods full of every thing, from the bear down, though," he said, as if qualifying this statement, "you will have to go back into the country eight or ten miles to find bear." There were deer and turkey without number. There had been no hunting since before the war, and game had accumulated, of course. Were we fond of hunting woodcock? Here was our chance. He had noticed several along this very road when he had visited the Hebron plantation just before going to New Orleans—the first visit, by the way, he had made to this place since before the war.

A covey of quail flew up before us. "Oh! yes, you will find them wherever you go."

We passed between the stately gate-posts.

"Here was my porter's lodge, but there is no sign of it now," he said, looking around inquiringly, adding that "it was probably destroyed by the soldiers."

"Do you see that Cherokee rose-hedge? Have you ever seen this rose in bloom? Though single, it is to me the most beautiful of all roses."

"Yes, roses grow rank. This is their country. When you see them in blossom here, you will have to acknowledge, as I have been compelled to, that you never saw roses until you saw them here.

"Did you notice that enormous mass of rose-bushes just before passing out of the gate-way? What variety did you think it was? It is the chromatilla! Perhaps there is more chromatilla rose-bush there than is to be found, all

put together, in all the conservatories of the North," he added.

"You can see," he said, "what a rich soil this is by the enormous vegetable growth all around us.

"This country was as smooth and as clear-cut as a lawn before the war. Now look at it—dead weed-stalks as high as a house in places; the ditches choked with bramble-bushes; young cotton-woods, willows, and sycamores growing every-where. Where is there a country that would produce such a growth in four years? It is not to be found on the face of the earth. Things look desolate enough compared with former times: the fences either rotted down or destroyed, buildings needing paint or whitewash—nothing tidy as before the war. There is one thing, however—the land has had rest, and it will be safe to build on a big crop."

This was encouraging!

The robins and meadow-larks were flying up all about us. "Yes, this is their season; the robins will soon all disappear, as the weather grows warm in the North, and so will most of the larks."

We passed a stream which Hampson called a bayou, and which he said had once been the bed of the Mississippi river, when the lake on which he lived had been a part of the river, and then he explained to us that the lakes in this country were the results of enormous bends, which would at length form peninsulas, and then in the course of time the neck of land would be cut in two—all this by the continued caving of the bank, caused by the rapid current against it, and the light, porous soil it has to work upon; then the mouths would gradually fill up with the deposit, which would be forced into them by the current, and thus the lake would be made. Several had been made since he had come into the country. The cut-off which had made the lake on which he lived, was, however, beyond the

memory of the oldest inhabitants, but here was the bayou which had once been one of its mouths.

As we rode along this stream, we started up ducks in abundance, which flew up the stream and then down it, quacking their alarm or defiance, and then splashing down into the water again within gun-shot.

What gunning here was, to be sure, and how we should enjoy it if we came here to live, I thought.

"Here is the Alhambra Plantation," (the property of the man who had been introduced on the wharf-boat as being keen as a brier). "That corner of his place we are just passing once produced two bales and a half of cotton to the acre," Hampson said, "and that big building in the distance is the Hebron gin-house, and there are the cabins for the negroes farther in the rear." "Where is the residence?" I asked. It had none! He had bought the place intending to present it to a daughter as a marriage gift.

"It was the custom to set the young people up in business on their marriage," he explained. "Where one parent presented the plantation, the other would stock it with slaves, mules, etc. Don't you think this preferable to the Northern habit of hoarding one's wealth until death, and then having it divided by the terms of a long will among one's children: some of whom have passed the period when they needed help, having accumulated wealth of their own, perhaps after a severe struggle which could have been saved by the timely assistance which was really their due—while others, not having the courage of their more fortunate brothers, have been ruined in the effort, and are therefore in no condition to enjoy it when it does come? It is to me a melancholy sight to witness, as I have in the North, the hungry relatives of a rich man waiting for him to die, so that his property may be distributed. All this was avoided here, by this, to me, charming Southern custom."

Returning to the subject of the Hebron place, he said he would have built a residence as soon as his daughter married, but the war had come on, and that had put a stop to every thing. With the exception of a residence, it was a complete plantation. There was, however, the overseer's cabin, which would make a snug little home, he said, until some thing better could be built. And so we reached the Hebron Plantation.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HEBRON PLANTATION.

We visited the plantation quarters first. Quite a number of negroes of different age and sex were visible, peering around the corners of cabins, or thrusting their woolly heads out of doors. Poultry in great abundance were cackling, and an astonishing number of hungry-looking dogs were lying around. A general air of idleness was every-where observable. There was the blacksmith-shop, as Hampson had written, and he called a negro, by the name of Cato, to bring him the keys. Cato called Hampson "marsa," which seemed to please him very much. Now that the negroes were free, it evidently seemed a great thing for them to still say "marsa" and "missus." When the door of the blacksmith-shop swung open, bellows, anvil, and hammers, all apparently quite complete, were displayed, and under the same roof was a carpenter's shop, of which Hampson had not made mention. We were next shown the store-house, where the provisions had been kept. It had a very substantial lock, with iron bars at the windows, giving it somewhat the appearance of a jail. Then there was the plantation cook-house, with its enor-

mous bake-oven, and its great iron kettles fastened in the brick range, such as we had seen in the West for rendering lard or boiling soap. Here the cooking for the whole plantation had been done in bulk. The cooked food, Hampson explained, was taken to the field for breakfast and dinner; for supper it was eaten in the quarters.

"I never stinted my slaves; whatever they could eat in reason, they got. I always paid a great deal of attention to a plantation garden, and fed my slaves abundantly with vegetables, which, besides being wholesome, saved meat. I allowed them to raise poultry, and to do what they pleased with it, either to eat it or sell it, which gave them what little spending money they needed. I have myself bought the poultry and eggs from my own slaves."

This he said, looking at us, as if he thought it was something at which we should be surprised.

"The suckling women were never crowded with work, and great care was taken that they should not become overheated. Their young were left in charge of the old mammies [superannuated negresses] in the quarters, who would take them to the field at stated times to be suckled. Good masters had covered spring-wagons for this purpose, and it was pleasant to see how happy both young and old were while making these little journeys."

In answer to our question, he said the increase among slaves was about forty per cent. annually—which we understood to mean forty per cent. of the women annually had young.

"It required the constant care of the overseer," he said, "to watch after these people to see that they took proper care of themselves—that is, that they were cleanly in their persons, and ate no unwholesome food.

"As to their work, it was all a mistake, the belief that they were overtasked. It was only in the picking season that they were really busy at all; four days in the week would average their work for the balance of the year.

During the picking season they did have to work hard—is not your harvest laborious?—going to the field before daylight many times, and working into the night; but it was at a season of the year when it was comparatively cool, and the climate permitted hard work. The fact is," continued he, "a hand could make with great ease more cotton than he could gather by the hardest work. Many planters would buy a few extra hands every fall, as they came away from their summering in Virginia or Kentucky, to help gather the crop. Bringing their laborers into the country at this season, they were immediately of great use, and would to some extent become acclimated before the hot weather of the following year; and yet, even with this extra help, it was impossible to gather the entire crop. Plowing commenced in January for the new crop, and while the plows were running picking was still going on, having commenced about the first of September, and thus fields white with cotton were frequently plowed under." (I thought to myself no cotton should ever be plowed under on a plantation of mine.) "This only applies to the swamp land; on the hills, where the yield was only one-third to one-half a bale, every thing was different. There all transactions were on a small scale. I know nothing of that country from actual experience."

In fact, I fancied Hampson turned up his nose, as if he would indicate the insignificance of the hill country when compared to the bottom-lands.

"Cotton," he said "was an absolutely certain crop before the war. I never knew a year when we did not make more than we could gather."

I asked him what he thought of the army-worm.

"They don't frighten me at all. They made their appearance two or three years before the war, at long intervals, and since they have so recently visited the country, they may not show themselves again for many years. I think it is borrowing trouble to dread them. For myself,

I do n't give them a thought, unless some one refers to them, as you have done."

We next visited the mule-shed. It had a capacity for not less than sixty head, with a stall and feed-trough for each, and with ample room for storing hay and fodder overhead. There was also a fine corn-crib close by, and a well, which had a rude windlass arrangement for drawing water, and a huge trough hollowed from a cypress-tree for the stock to drink from. A box about the size and shape of a wagon-bed, near by, with a brick chimney at its head, was explained to be a fixture for steaming cotton-seed as food for the stock, said to be nourishing.

Then we drifted down into the woods, and started up a drove of long-horned animals, which Hampson told us were "Texas cattle, which Dr. Hudson brought out from that country with him after the war. These cattle are for sale," he said "for beef. They were put into my winter pasture while being disposed of. They are bought mostly by the levee contractors," he added, as he saw a look of incredulity at his statement that they were "beef" cattle. The impression we had of them, with their sides not apparently over six inches through, as they scampered off, was that they must be all horn, hide, and bone; and our belief in their being any thing fit to eat, though they might be palmed off on levee contractors, was not in the least strengthened when, a couple of rods further on, we found two of them bogged down in the hopeless mire of a ditch, the veriest pictures of poverty, so far as flesh was concerned. Hampson did n't even then call them poor, but said they were weak from their long journey out from Texas.

Was this a fair specimen of the cattle of the country? I asked.

"Yes, the cattle here are for the most part Texas. The fact is, before the war cotton and slaves were our only staples, and no attention was paid to any thing else. Each

planter would have a few yoke of cattle, such as you have just seen—of course they would be filled out better—to haul saw-logs, etc., and a few milch-cows of the same breed for home use. These cows would give a scant half-gallon of milk a day; but as for butter, no one ever thought of making that, and, though hogs throve well here, only now and then a planter made his own meat."

"But did no one ever attempt to introduce good milch-cows here?" I asked.

"I have heard of here and there a sickly attempt to introduce blooded cattle, but they seemed to require so much care, it was soon abandoned. Texas cattle grew natural, just as negroes, or cotton, or Bermuda grass. The cattle you've just seen did 'nt look very trim to you, perhaps, but their meat is really very fine."

I thought to myself, wait until we get down here—we would have fine cattle, would bring them with us; and if they needed attention, which of course they would, wherever they might be—did 'nt we slop our Ayrshire cow at home morning and night, and stable her the same as our horses, and did 'nt she pay us back with a bucket full of milk twice a day, even in midwinter—why we would give it to them. And as for our meat, we would only buy that the first year; after that, as I was a man, we would raise it. No ninety-one barrels of pork coming down the river annually directed to the Hebron plantation. We would knock that item square out of the Dobson estimate, at the end of the first year.

Hampson had spoken of his winter pasture. I asked, what did he mean by that? I could see no live grass.

"Do you see the green cane all about you? The stock feed on its leaves and tender shoots, and are very fond of it. It will keep mules in good order without any corn. You can see the cane-brake is of dense growth, which affords warm shelter for stock the coldest winter days we have here.

"Fine hiding-places for run-away negroes," he added, apparently thinking aloud, and then quickly continued, as if he would divert us and himself instantly from this thought: "Glorious cover for wild game, too—you 'd find many a deer if you 'd shake up that brake," looking over his shoulder as we turned to retrace our steps.

We next "did" the gin-house, which was a three-story building covering at least a quarter of an acre of ground, and apparently in complete repair. Under its roof were the saw and grist-mills, and the machinery for ginning and baling cotton, all propelled by the same engine—Richmond, Va., make. They do manufacture something in the South, I thought. Encouraged at this, I looked at the gin-stands, but they were made somewhere in Massachusetts, and both the saw and grist-mills were marked Cincinnti, Ohio.

Hampson expatiated upon the importance of the invention of the gin-stand, which he held to rank with that of steam-engine and telegraph. What a task it was to get the lint from off the seed when it was done by hand, and how easy it was now, as the little circular saws, fastened in a belt and with hooked teeth, pulled the lint away from the seed, sending the fleecy staple through an air-chamber, up into the lint-room, reminding you as it fell of the falling of huge snow flakes. "The fruit of the cotton plant," said he, "goes where the chaff from the wheat goes, and *vice versa*."

If there was a belt or bolt or any thing lacking, we could not perceive it. To all appearance it was a perfectly complete arrangement. It certainly looked as if all you had to do, was to put fire in the furnace, and, whether you wanted to grind meal, or saw lumber, or gin a bale of cotton, you had only to put on the proper belt, and the thing was at work. There were huge round tanks by the side of the gin-house, and two or three cemented cisterns under it, with troughs leading from the roof to catch the rain-water, and should this supply ever become ex-

hausted, there was a well hard by. There was an immense sloping scaffold in front, to dry the cotton, when it was brought in damp from the field. There was a large lantern suspended by a rope arranged on a pully from the cone of the roof in front, so that the night-work of putting the dried cotton from the scaffold into the third story of the gin-house, and the day's picking from the wagons upon the scaffold for the next day's sunning, should be done without any carrying about of lights, cotton being so inflammable.

"It was customary," Hampson said, "for the negroes to pick as long as it was light enough for them to see, the cotton being piled in wagons as it was picked—then all hands to the gin-house. The lantern was lit, and the cotton which had been sunning on the scaffold was gathered up in baskets and carried up stairs. Then the freshly picked cotton was taken from the wagons and scattered on the scaffold. Sometimes this would take from nine until ten o'clock. Bright moonlight nights, if there had been a good deal of rain, and the cotton was open so as to be in danger of being beaten by further rains, they would, after taking supper, go back to the field and pick; but this scaffold work was about all the night-work they did, and this they would do chanting their strange tunes and singing plantation melodies.

"This gin-house," Hampson added, "cost me twenty-five thousand dollars.

I asked him how it came to be so well preserved?

"Cato, the negro who gave us the keys, and his brother James remained at their post and guarded the property. They were faithful servants to me," he continued, looking around. "I was pleasantly disappointed to find my property so well cared for."

Riding toward the upper line of the plantation we came to a long building which Hampson told us was a weather-shed. It was not inclosed, being simply a roof with gutters under its eaves, which we could see led to

cisterns. There were several of these sheds on the place, he said, and in case of rain, the hands working in the vicinity were huddled into them, thus keeping them dry, and saving the loss of time in going to and from the quarters, besides furnishing a bountiful supply of healthy rain-water for the hands to drink, at convenient localities on the plantation.

We understood him to say he never allowed his slaves to drink any thing but rain-water, that well-water, or as he called it, "seepage" water, was very unwholesome.

We looked at the bank in front to see if we could discover any signs of caving. Poor fools! We could see none. (We didn't want to see any thing unfavorable.) Hampson called a negro who was passing—as if he would not ask us to take his own testimony as to what the bank here had been doing many years back, or what it was doing now.

He asked the negro to whom he used to belong, and how long he had been in the country.

"I used to 'long to Mr. Samson, an' hab libed here sence de stars fell, when ebber dat was."

"Has there ever been any caving of the bank here," Hampson asked a little sharply.

"Not as I can recomember."

"We have taken a bird's-eye view of the place now," Hampson said, "and so we will start on our return to Hambleton," which we finally reached.

Then followed whisky-toddy No. 3. I need hardly say that I improved on my first morning effort.

CHAPTER XVII.

DINNER AT HAMBLETON, AND WHAT FOLLOWED.

Dinner was served immediately upon our return to Hambleton, with claret, sherry, and a rum-punch for the climax, after which we settled for a little business talk.

But what a condition I was in for a "business" talk, after three whisky-toddies, claret, sherry, and a rum-punch, on virgin soil, so to speak—more liquor than I had consumed in any year of my natural life before. There was not a single piece of furniture in the room that was not double its natural size, and the table stretched out, as did the dining-room, till it seemed a quarter of a mile long. I distinctly saw two Hampsons beaming at me at the head of the table, and there was a pair of Dobsons, with faces red as the neck of a turkey-gobbler. A thought of the Dobson estimate spun across my spinning brain, with an extra cypher added, so that the number was 9,000 bales, which I almost saw ready piled up in front of the Hebron plantation. While my thoughts were spinning around like a top, and Dobson's ditto, I had a vague impression that Hampson was only just wound up for business; in other words, what had set our brains reeling, had simply steadied Hampson's nerves for the work before him. More than ever in our lives before we needed our heads on our shoulders, and more than ever before they went gipsying. We were in no condition even to trade jack-knives, and here was a trade to make involving eighty-seven thousand five hundred dollars. Hampson's statements, while we were going over the Hebron plantation, of the easy manner in which cotton was made, had almost intoxicated us, and then the liquor we drank produced a sure-enough intoxication—altogether, instead

of being in a condition to drive a close bargain, we were fine subjects for a twenty-four hours' sleep, with hat and boots on, wherever we might chance to fall.

I have an indistinct recollection of asking Hampson the original conundrum as to whether the price he had named was his lowest figure, to which he of course answered "yes," plainly seeing that we were ready to take the plantation at any figure; and then he made us long for it all the more by saying that his friends thought he was foolish to sell it at all at this time. Lands would certainly go higher in their opinion, and he was inclined to agree with them. "Of course, one can not look into the future," he added, "but every thing points to a big yield of cotton the present year. I have never made less than seven hundred and fifty bales on the Hebron plantation. It is, as you see, magnificently equipped, and is safe from overflow." Notwithstanding my addled brain, I was able to see that, whether Hampson meant it or not, he *seemed* perfectly indifferent as to whether we took the place or not.

"I have offered it to you, and will of course hold to it, but, if I had not already done that, I am not at this moment prepared to say, as things look, whether I would name a price. As for taking less, I could not entertain such a thought for an instant."

The liquor in our brains relinquished its hold long enough to enable us to make the sane answer—that we would send him our decision in writing from the wharf-boat. Of course our minds were already made up, but in our sober moments we fancied we had concealed that fact from Hampson, and this answer we thought would further conceal it from him, knowing as he must that it was a resolution taken while we were not exactly steady on our feet—just in that condition when we would be likely to say precisely what was in our minds. Our answer, however, did not stagger Hampson in the least,—he simply replied:

"Take your own time, gentlemen," and so we bowed ourselves out.

A few moments in the open air steadied our nerves and cooled our brains. Dobson looked at me curiously and I returned the look, saying: "Dobson, we have both been drunk," and he replied, looking sheepishly, "A little tipsy." Then we tried to gather up our thoughts, to see how far we had committed ourselves, and just how foolish we had been and then, just as many another man does who has fallen into the same snare, we felt very cheap over it all, and thought how Hampson might tell the story of our discomforture to his friends, and how they would all laugh at it. There was one consolation, however,—if Hampson had started out to do it, which, of course, he had not, by plying us with drink, he had not succeeded in getting us committed to the purchase of the Hebron plantation.

In my eagerness in the morning, I had failed to notice the village at the landing. Now, as we walked leisurely back, I looked around for it. I had asked Pompey in the morning, what was the population of the Lake, meaning the village, and his answer was:

"Fishes."

Pompey was not much out of the way, so far as I could see of any town (if I had seen it, as I did afterwards, in the midst of overflow, I should have said he was perfectly correct).

The fact is, like all the river towns, except Memphis, Vicksburg, Natchez, Baton-Rouge, and New Orleans, as we learned later, it was simply a river landing, with a dozen or so of houses, including the inevitable bar-rooms, a couple of general assortment stores, and a drug-store—all needing paint or whitewash. But the buildings, all told, did not make any more show than those on the Hebron plantation would if they had been huddled together. A two-story building, used as one of the store-rooms, with a ragged hole in its river front—the mark of a gun-boat shell—and a

church edifice, with a tall spire, were the two prominent features of the village. The population could not have numbered over two hundred, and as for the people themselves, there were many shabby specimens among them.

I had yet to learn that a large part of the people congregated in these river towns were of the objectionable classes of society; that gambling, drunkenness and crime were here established institutions; that these places were, in fact, so many stations on the river where the offscourings of all countries swarmed; where order, peace and good morals were openly defied—and some times law itself; that they always cursed the neighborhood for miles around them by their baneful influence upon the youth, and upon those of maturer years, to be found, alas, every-where, who were without the power to successfully resist temptation.

A sight, which absolutely thrilled me with horror, was the village grave-yard, without the sign of a fence around it, and a drove of hogs rooting among the graves! It was located where every body must either pass it daily, or if they stepped out of their doors could not fail to see it, and yet not a hand was lifted to save it from the ravages which were being made upon it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WE PURCHASE THE HEBRON PLANTATION.

Back upon the wharf-boat, we proceeded to compare impressions. This was a mere matter of form, however, for my commitment to the Dobson scheme was, as a simple fact, if the truth must be told, the purchase of the Hebron plantation, and in one sense, that is so far as I could make

it so, it was as much ours from that day as it would be after the deed was drawn and the money paid over. We were now going through the formalities, of which our coming down to look at the place was one. Of course we would not have been willing at the time to have acknowledged so much—that would not have been business,—but nevertheless it was true, and we knew it.

In short, we should have done quite as well, so far as there was any display of judgment on our part after we saw Hebron, to have simply replied to Hampson's communication that we would take the place, and then brought our outfit with our purchase money, and gone immediately to work, thus saving the expense of one journey and getting started earlier in the season.

We employed no experts to look over the fields with us, but simply swallowed every thing Hampson told us from beginning to end; and, the fact is, in our mood, we would have bought any thing that any man calling himself Hampson might have pointed out to us as the Hebron plantation, even if it had been the very place which a later comer purchased, and, while making an examination of it, asked the owner if it overflowed, when he was told to examine the trees and see if he could find any water-lines on them. He peered around the roots and several inches up the sides of the trees, and could see no marks, concluded the place was safe, and purchased it, when, poor fool, if he had looked fifteen feet up the sides of the trees, he would have seen the marks of annual overflow very distinctly!

It is true, I remember to have reasoned, in the effort to excuse myself for what I knew to be our unbusiness-like course,—we are, as it were, in the enemy's country, and to whom could we safely go? What assurance had we that any opinion we might purchase would not be the veriest deception? We had heard much of Southern honor, was

it not safer to trust to that? Yes, if any thing was safe, that was.

Besides, Hampson did not really seem to want to sell the place, which of itself was some assurance, on the principle that an article which the possessor would like to keep is safe to purchase. There had been no effort on his part to deceive us, and then did we not remember that nearly everybody to whom we had been introduced on the boat in the morning had said something in praise of this plantation? The host himself had been enthusiastic on the subject of its good qualities.

When all at home agreed so thoroughly, there should no longer be any doubt in the mind of a stranger. Most of these who had spoken so highly were planters themselves, and what better recommendation could we have than the favorable opinion of men in the same line of business?

We knew perfectly well that the price was a good round one, but if the future was what was predicted for it, it would soon be cheap. It was certainly better economy to buy the land outright, at seventy-five dollars an acre, than to pay from ten to twenty-five dollars an acre rent for a single year, as many of the new-comers were doing.

There could be no question about its being good land, though it did not look very prepossessing with its enormous vegetable growth all over it, but that told of a rich soil beneath. It was also on the highway of the Mississippi, in the heart of the cotton region. It was not cheap land, because it was not in a cheap locality. It was in short to plantations in general, what property on Broadway, New York, was to New York itself; property there brought big figures, but it never went begging for a purchaser. So it was and would be with this class of plantation property.

Having thus reasoned to ourselves that we should be safe in making this purchase, we then wrote a formal note to General Hampson, saying that we would take the place on his terms, and Pompey was detailed to deliver it.

Thus the Dobson scheme was an accomplished fact. What we should have done now, was to employ a lawyer to examine the title, and an engineer to measure the place. But we did neither. So far as the title went, Hampson himself was a lawyer, and there was no question but that he could and would make us a good deed, we thought, and then there recurred our feeling of distrust of the people in whose midst we were about to locate. We fancied we had already seen a something,—perhaps it was the universal praise of the place we had just bargained for, looking as if each man were acting as Hampson's agent; perhaps it was their habit of huddling together and talking in a low tone of voice, looking at us, as if we were the topic; and yet just what it was, we could not have defined:—it made us feel, however, that we were dealing with a close corporation, that what was the opinion of one, was the opinion of all; and if we were to be sold out, would it not be better to be sold trusting to the honor of men than after we had bought their opinions?

We might pay five hundred dollars to an attorney to examine as to the title, or the same amount to an engineer for measurement of the land; but would not there still be an uncertainty as to whether we were getting faithful service? So we decided to trust to the honor of the man we had to deal with, to his assurance that his deed was a good one, and that all the land was there it called for.

It was a hazardous experiment, but we could see no other course open for us, and so we made our first payment of twenty-seven thousand dollars, gave our notes for the balance, and took the deed. We felt a decided shock in this operation (which consumed the better part of two days, and at least six whisky-toddies) when Hampson told us it was the custom of the country for the purchaser to pay for the cost of making the deed, and then the notary, a broad-shouldered, smiling personage, said the bill was three hundred and seventy-five dollars—one hundred and fifty dol-

lars of which was his fee, and two hundred and twenty-five dollars for the "Yankee" government.

Here were three hundred and seventy-five dollars not included in the Dobson estimate. It did not look reasonable that we should pay this. It was Hampson's deed, not ours; but he assured us on his honor as a man that it was for us to pay, and then appealed to the notary, who said there was no question about it, so we reluctantly paid the amount.

There being no residence on the place, what to do for a house for our families to live in was a question. We could not think of taking them into the overseer's cabin, even if it was a "snug place."

In our dilemma, we consulted Captain Tyler.

He thought for a moment, and then asked us if we had noticed on our way to Hambleton a pleasant-looking house.

"Yes," we replied, "but that will be two miles away from our business."

"Ah! well, you will of course have an overseer; your duty will be that of general supervision, which you can attend to as well at that distance as if you were on the ground. This house will just suit you, I think, and is at present unoccupied. It will need some repairs, no doubt. I will try and see the owner, if you wish it."

We said we would thank him if he would do so, and the next morning Tyler introduced us.

"Yes, I suppose the house is for rent."

"At what price?"

"Well, I will have to ask you," thinking for a moment, "at the rate of from eight hundred to one thousand dollars per annum, and will allow two hundred for repairs."

Notwithstanding this extortionate demand, we concluded to take it, as all hands were of the opinion that this was our only chance, and really we were quite fortunate, they all said with one voice, to be able to get it. It was ap-

parently understood that we should rent this house, and every energy was bent in that direction.

"Do you wish to draw up papers of lease?"

"No; my word is good as my bond," with a little fire in his eye.

"We did not doubt that," we said, "and only suggested it because it was considered the business course."

Tyler introduced us to a gentleman by the name of Distom—Colonel Distom he called him—who, he said, had raised a crop of cotton the year before in the neighborhood, and who had just formed a partnership with a new-comer to plant a large place in the rear of the Hebron plantation.

"You will want cotton-seed for planting," Tyler said, 'and you have an abundance of good seed, have you not, Colonel?"

"Oh, yes, I have plenty of it."

"Will you sell us our supply?"

"To be sure, it is for sale."

"At what price?"

"At the market-price, whatever that is at the time you want the seed."

"How much seed will it take to plant nine hundred acres?"

"Fifteen hundred bushels will be ample."

"Will you engage to let us have that quantity?"

"Certainly."

"We will consider it a contract, then, and will send our wagons for the seed whenever we need it for planting, paying you for it then."

"That is all right."

"Shall we reduce our understanding to writing?"

"Oh, no; my word is as good as my bond. You will certainly get the seed whenever you send for it."

We asked Tyler where we had best have our freight landed, at our plantation-landing, or at his wharf-boat?

"Oh, at my wharf-boat, by all means. I will take good care of it."

CHAPTER XIX.

WE FORM A CO-PARTNERSHIP AND SELECT OUR LABOR.

On our return, we called Gale and Johnson together, and made our report.

Gale, being a lawyer, it was arranged that he should draw up the articles of partnership, which he did, having them handsomely copied, and fastened with an abundance of blue ribbon. Mechanically speaking, the document was very handsome, and as an exhaustive article on partnerships complete. The amounts specified ran up into that enchanting atmosphere of hundreds of thousands, making it a luxurious affair. A national bank, or local fire insurance company, alongside of it, would have to take a back-seat.

Dobson and myself were to receive the same salary—fifteen hundred dollars per annum; Johnson's was to be a thousand.

As I walked home with my copy of the articles of partnership, to show to Mrs. Harding, I felt again as I did when, first made a party to the Dobson scheme, I had traveled this same route.

Again I chanced to see Mr. Cooper in his bank window. Our enterprise was now established, and the temptation came over me to show him what we proposed to do. I did so, and when he had gone over it all, and looked up at me through his sagacious spectacles, I inquired:

"What do you think of it?"

"Cut it in two in the middle, and divide that by half,

and you 'll be nearer the mark," he answered curtly, though pleasantly.

"Why so?" I asked, a little nettled over his estimate.

"Just on the principle that these enterprises never do any more than that, and seldom as much," he replied, with great good common sense glowing in his expressive countenance.

"Well, there are exceptions to all rules," I said, spiritedly, "and I defy any one to find a flaw in the Dobson estimate. Wish us well, anyhow,"

"Oh, I do that with all my heart."

Mr. Cooper's opinion was a wet blanket, and I felt sorry I had called on him. I shook my head viciously as I passed out of his bank, thinking, "I will show you whether the Dobson estimate is to be cut in two, and then halved. For once, Mr. Cooper, you are simply mistaken." For a considerable time afterward I held a grudge toward him.

We had discussed the subject of labor during our return journey, and concluded as follows:

First. There were, as we had seen, quite a number of negroes on the plantation, and although we had not talked with them, we presumed we could get their services. They were, no doubt, a portion of the former slaves of the place, and were attached to it, and from their knowledge of it, and cotton-planting, they would be very valuable to us. Cato and James were among the number, they who had saved Hampson's large interest from injury. What better recommendation could we have? Undoubtedly these two were choice hands, and being also, as Hampson said, leaders, they would hardly be likely to have any but the same class about them. We thought we could count with confidence on engaging this lot of laborers.

Second. We determined to try some white labor.

Third. We would carry down with us a squad of negroes.

In order to have these go forward with our outfit, we posted a hand-bill immediately, containing such specifications as these :

" Wanted !

" White and colored labor for a cotton-plantation.

" Good wages will be paid.

" None but farm-hands need apply.

" Office at———, for ten days."

Johnson was stationed as recruiting agent, and within the ten days he selected, from not less than two hundred applicants, twenty-five of each color, all of whom declared themselves to be farmers.

The idea was to take the black people from that class known as " contrabands," meaning the former slaves who had drifted North during the war. These people, we reasoned, had found a climate illy suited to them, and competition for day-labor very great, and even if the best of them managed to put away a little money, and but here and there one could do that much, during the warm months, it was all gone before spring, so that they would only be too glad of an opportunity to get back South.

There could certainly be no hazard in taking down this class, who would be thoroughly cured of that nameless longing for breathing the Northern air, and of that absurd idea that in the country whence the " Yankees " came, no labor was required. In short, we thought this Northern discipline would in every way fit them the better to perform the labor devolving on them as free men.

The white labor was an experiment. A general agreement was drawn up which each one as he was accepted was required to sign, to the effect that for the purpose of raising a crop of cotton and corn on the Hebron plantation, the undersigned engaged themselves for the year 1866, at such wages as were customary in the neighborhood, one-half in cash monthly, the balance at the end of the year,— the weekly ration to be four pounds of pork, a peck of

meal and a pint of molasses; the whites to have six pounds of flour in lieu of the meal, with a ration of coffee and sugar, and either rice, hominy or potatoes.

A more ragged or hungrier-looking set than the black people engaged would be difficult to find, and as the weather was very cold, they appeared half frozen. It was a sorry sight. But if they were, as they all asserted, cotton-hands, their condition was rather in their favor, viewed as discipline. Stepping from the fitful support of an occasional job, into steady occupation, the very kind to which they had been reared, would naturally make contented laborers of them. Getting back to their country again would soon thaw them out; then their hunger would be appeased, and very shortly their wages would enable them to shed their rags.

We felt that we had a prize in this lot of hands. True, we had to take their simple statement that they were cotton-hands. Being perfectly ignorant of the mode of raising cotton, we could ask them no questions that would settle their status in this respect. If they were impostors, it would only come out when they were put to the test on the plantation. It was hazardous not to be satisfied on this point, but every thing has its risk, and this was the risk in the present case, because if they were cotton-hands there could be nothing else against them, and with their rough experience in the North, if negroes proved any sort of a success as free cotton laborers, these would be *par excellence*.

What mattered it if their skin had, from exposure and poor food, assumed a dull, dingy hue? What mattered it if they persisted in hugging the fire, and pulling their rags closer about them, showing but little life, and not a vein of their wonted humor? A short time under their sunny Southern sky would make them as much the Sambo as ever. A few days in the cotton-field and regular rations of pork and meal would put the shine of health to their skin, and fill their mouths with the plantation melodies of old.

Yes, it was the cotton-field they were pining for—that

would put them on their feet again. Were we not, then, while serving ourselves so well, also acting a good part toward the poor black people, in carrying them back to a congenial climate and occupation, from which they had, as it were, strayed? Now that slavery was no more, these people would, as a class, sooner or later, drift there.

We were simply pioneers in the enterprise of starting this tide of immigration, which was just as essentail to the prosperity of the Southern country as was capital itself. Slavery had been the only system of labor. That being abolished rendered the creation of a system necessary. The slaves themselves would form largely the material for this first effort. Just to the extent that they were a success would the country itself be a success, and if they were a success—of which there was little or no doubt—every one that could be induced to go there would be so much wealth to the country.

Whichever way we might view it, then, we felt we were making no mistake in taking the black people down with us, although it was barely possible we might be deceived in those we had selected.

Naturally, if black labor was just the thing for us, white labor was not the thing.

There were arguments, however, in favor of white labor, chief of which was that our boys in the army had campaigned through the swamps of the South with a very small percentage of sickness. If they could stand a summer's campaign there, or, for that matter, several summers, could they not stand a summer in the cotton-field?—and if they were able to get through the season without sickness, what could not be accomplished with industrious, stout-hearted, intelligent Northern farmers?

They would know nothing about cotton-raising, but it was, perhaps, not very different from corn, or other products with which they were perfectly familiar, and they would learn as the season progressed.

If white labor should prove a success, the question of labor was at once settled forever. It was at least worth a trial.

We were a little shaky when we saw our lot of twenty-five, though they all stoutly declared they were born farmers.

CHAPTER XX.

WE TAKE OUR DEPARTURE FOR THE HEBRON PLANTATION.

About this time, we received a letter from an individual in the South, soliciting the position of overseer. He furnished good references, and offered to serve us for twelve hundred dollars a year.

Tyler said we should want an overseer. I mentally repudiated the idea at the time, knowing that Dobson's statement had not mentioned this want; but neither had it mentioned four thousand dollars in salaries to the members of the firm who were to superintend the enterprise, nor a thousand dollars or more for cotton-seed, nor a thousand dollars for house-rent; and now here was a chance to spend twelve hundred dollars more. Altogether, I began to fear that Dobson's statement was not infallible, but, then, what were a few thousand dollars, he said, when I mildly hinted my doubt, when the margin of profit was so great?

So we called a meeting of the firm, and it was decided, in view of our inexperience, etc., we had better have an overseer. To save twelve hundred dollars, we might hazard many thousands. At least for the first year, and in view of our white labor project, we had better have the experience of a practical planter; after that, we could do as we pleased. Every thing depended on our making the

right start. So the overseer was engaged, to report for duty at a date named.

At the almost daily government auction sales of surplus army equipments, in different parts of the country, were offered many articles included in our list of wants. A sale of this kind at Lexington, Kentucky, came off just at the right time, and so, thinking to make some cheap purchases, and thus help out the Dobson estimate, which, it was plain to be seen, was pulling down the wrong side of the scale, I took a trip to Lexington, but, beyond having knocked down to me the wreck of a wagon, a few incomplete sets of harness, and trace-chains enough to stock half a dozen plantations, I accomplished nothing—returning in great disgust over my fool's errand. My only consolation was, that I found numbers of parties who were going South as we were, and who, like myself, had seized upon this opportunity to buy bargains, and had shared my fate.

Our mules were, however, the result of a government auction sale, though we purchased them second-hand, having to pay the usual middle-man's profit. The rest of our outfit we purchased in Cincinnati, with the exception of a few "improved" plows, bought after much persuasion at a home manufactory, and which were sold us at wholesale rates, as an inducement for our introducing them; our swingle-trees and double-trees, which a home blacksmith insisted on making for us; and our stock of medicines, which came from our own drug-store.

Two afternoon freight-cars, for our mules, and a second-class night-car, on the same day, for our hands, conveyed our outfit to Cincinnati, just in time to strike the "Mayflower," bound for New Orleans and way-landings. I went down to Cincinnati to see the enterprise off, though Adjutant Johnson was in immediate command, and would continue so, accompanying the expedition to the plantation, I having to return for my family.

Dobson had left, immediately after the arrangement of

our partnership, to join his wife, who was enjoying the gayeties of the Washington season. They would follow on later. It was arranged that on my arrival at Hebron I should look around, and, whatever I discovered lacking, I should notify Dobson, when he would bring it down with him. Until he heard from me, he was to remain at our home, after his return from Washington.

After waving an adieu to the "Mayflower" as she pushed out from the Cincinnati wharf with our valuable cargo on board, getting my last glimpse of that little hero, Adjutant Johnson, I hurried back home, spoke hasty farewells to the relatives and friends we were leaving behind, and with my little family steamed away from a spot where we had seen so many happy years. How I should have clung to that parting hour if I could have read the future!

CHAPTER XXI.

OUR VOYAGE DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER.

We avoided the tubular boilers this time at Cairo, waiting a whole day for a boat with old-fashioned boilers, which finally came along in the shape of the "Mary E. Forsythe."

Our trip down the river is one of the most agreeable memories of our lives, and if that good old Captain ——— is yet living, and should chance to read these lines, I thank him again for his kindness to us.

Among the passengers were Colonel Graham and his charming wife, from Indiana, on their way to settle on a plantation only a dozen miles below us. There was Colonel Jordan, a brother-in-law of the Confederate Secretary of War, and a sugar-planter from lower Louisiana, on his way

home with his family after their long stay in Virginia during the rebellion. What a genial, whole-souled gentleman he proved to be! And his motherless children—though hardly motherless, because of the devotion of their father's niece—what pattern children they were, with their Creole cast of features!

Here were a people with no drop of so-called Northern blood in their veins—they well knew we had no drop of so-called Southern blood in ours; and yet their hearts were in their mouths, and they were overflowing with kindly feeling for us.

Colonel and Mrs. Jacobs, of Mississippi, were also passengers. They, too, were native Southerners, and yet they displayed not a jot of prejudice towards those of us from the North.

No more cordial reception could possibly have been given than that accorded to us by these and other delightful steamboat acquaintances—people of the South—on the threshold, as it were, of our Southern experience. There was not the least show of clannishness about them; we danced, sang, played whist, visited the pilot-house, sat in the Captain's room in the texas, vexed the clerk with our questions, and took the breezes on the forecastle, together, as if we were one family.

How like oil this cordial reception seemed to us, too, with our recent wounds of separation from relatives and friends! Scarce had we bidden adieu to a circle which in the hour of parting we felt could never be duplicated, when these new associations were formed, commanding not only friendship, but really stirring the fountain of affection. Scarcely had we severed the old bonds, which held us as with hooks of steel, when a silken cord was thrown around us, and we felt almost guilty when we stopped a moment and thought that the pangs of parting from the old life-long associations were fast resolving themselves into pleasant

memories, while we were basking in the sunshine of this new life.

Such was our experience on this voyage; but it was the hour of sunshine before the long, weary season of storm. We were shortly to step upon an inhospitable shore, where blows would be dealt at us from every direction; the greeting at our coming was to be but a continued insult—we were to be looked upon either as a common enemy, or, at best, simply tolerated.

At Memphis, the following letter from Adjutant Johnson awaited us:

"ON BOARD STEAMER MAYFLOWER,
"MEMPHIS, *January* 24, 1866.

"MY DEAR SIR:—Just as the boat is about to push out, I send off this line to let you know that we are so far on our way with no serious occurrence.

"The weather has been bright and cold. As a consequence, the black people, as deck-passengers, have suffered considerably. Three of them jumped me at Cairo, and I find, on counting noses, that I 've only sixteen whites left. It looks a little as if there was a trick out on the part of the missing ones to get their fare paid down to Memphis. However, they may come back yet. I gave them permission to go out and look at the town. Their time was up ten minutes ago.

"These white fellows have given me a world of trouble. Although I have them in the cabin, nothing is good enough for them. Won't I make them work to pay for it when I get them on the plantation!—always, of course, if there is any work in them. The fact is, I am a little shaky over our selection of white 'farmers.' I have been sick, but am better now. Mules doing well.

"Yours,
"JOHNSON.

"P. S.—Two of the white men just reported, both tipsy.

This leaves me seven short. Shall have Billy stand guard at every landing, so as to lose no more. J."

"Billy" was Dobson's hostler in the army, and was going down to take charge of our mules.

I could see, from my steamboat experience, that travel on the Mississippi river has two phases, viz., first, that which belongs to the ladies' cabin, and, second, that which belongs to the gentlemen's cabin.

The line of distinction between the two is marked. My first experience was, as I have related, in the gentlemen's cabin, where liquors of all kinds, mixed in every conceivable way, abound, with card-playing, all imaginable games, but chiefly poker, as the pastime, money passing freely in these several games. There is to be seen a great display of cleanly shaved faces, and profusely greased hair, and highly polished boots, on the part of each new passenger, as the second operation after getting on the boat—the first operation being generally a drink at the bar. This, as I had seen, was the general make-up of the gentlemen's cabin. Two-thirds of the way up—that is, backward—in the steamboat cabin, was a line beyond which the men-passengers, unaccompanied by ladies, were not allowed to go; at the same time, however, it was considered quite the thing for lady-passengers, accompanied by gentlemen or not, to visit any part of the boat, especially the forecastle and pilot-house, to drink in breaths of fresh air, and get a better view of the passing scenery of the country. When music was struck up for dancing in the evening the men-passengers crowded up to the line just mentioned, and quietly watched the scene. Only occasionally the captain of the boat invited a male passenger to cross over the line and participate in the dance. There were not, indeed, any published rules regarding this dividing line, nor were the officers in the habit of calling attention to it directly—its observance seemed

to be the result of custom. The second phase of steamboat life, that which we were now enjoying in the ladies' cabin, with piano-music, songs by lady passengers, card-playing, the negro-band in the evening, with dancing, was in every way charming, and as often as I looked down this cabin, and saw the crowds of male loungers at their various occupations and amusements, and remembered my own experience, I could not do otherwise than pity them.

We were at dinner when our destination was signaled. What a crowding there was out upon the guards to see us off! While the boat was rounding to, we stood in the midst of our circle of new-found friends, and our regrets at leaving them were almost as keen as those we had recently experienced when we had left behind us beloved relatives and friendships of many years' growth.

Our baggage goes off, and with it a couple of bundles which we do not recognize as ours. The Captain whispers to Mrs. Harding, as if he would not let his right hand know, etc.:

"A few beefsteaks, and a couple of loaves of bread for you."

Thoughtful man! If he could have seen how poor, sick Adjutant Johnson enjoyed that fresh bread and the tender, juicy beefsteak that evening for his supper, the first he had tasted since leaving the Mayflower, he would have been more than repaid!

At last we are on the bank, and many handkerchiefs are waving adieus from the steamboat. There the little Jordans are throwing their farewell kisses to our two boys, one of whom stands holding our little shepherd puppy, all dripping from his first Mississippi bath, which he has just received from falling off the stage-plank—clumsy fellow—while attempting to make the shore, and from which he has been rescued by one of the deck-hands. There stands my wife, holding a little French clock, with its bronze figure of "Ruth clasping her gleanings." There stands

our year-and-a-half old baby-boy, holding fast to his little rocking-chair. There I myself stand with my hands full of satchels and a bundle under each arm; and so, while the boat bears our friends away, there being no conveyance to be had at the landing for either love or money, and Tyler's wharf-boat, with its squad of loungers, being any thing but an attractive place for a family, we start off, on foot, for our half-mile journey to our new home beyond the freshly made levee.

The spring rains have set in, and such mud as only this swamp-country can produce is the consequence. As we flounder along in it, I point out the big store with its ghastly gun-shot wound, and then the neglected grave-yard where the swine are still at work.

Still we flounder through the mud, but soon our little toddler gives out. I stoop down and let him fasten himself to my back, with one chubby arm about my neck, holding fast to his chair with the other. Then the clock gets very heavy in my wife's arms. It is all she can do to pull out her little feet at each step as the black, putty-like mud sucks them in. So, notwithstanding the bundles under my arms, the satchels in my hands, and the baby on my back, I manage to make a shelf of my breast, with satchels and bundles, on which, very reluctantly, seeing that I am already weighted down, she deposits the clock. I laughingly ask her if she does n't think I make a lively mantle-piece, and then we all trudge on. Great drops of sweat stand on my face. Mrs. Harding wipes them away with her handkerchief, which shows a trembling hand. She is evidently very weak, but tells me not to mind her, she is all right, and, as if to convince me, insists on resuming her burden; but no, I say, it is no load at all, and call it jolly fun. Our boy trudges along behind, with Mike in his arms, the shaggy fellow still moist from his bath. People tumble out from the whisky-shops and gape at us as if we were natural curiosities. Either dazed by their experience

in these shops, or by our general make-up, they all stand and stare, no one offering to lend us a helping hand.

Finally we come to the new levee, and there is our house beyond. But the first step in the freshly thrown-up earth warns us not to attempt to cross it. We look on either side of it for a road-way, and see nothing but water on the surface, with doubtless a worse mire underneath.

There is the piece of a cast-away wheeling-plank near, and we all sink down on it well-nigh exhausted. Then I mentally hold a council of war. There are other planks about, and, relieved of my load, after a moment's rest I proceed to make a plank-way along the new levee with these. At the foot of the levee is a cast-away wheel-barrow. I get it up on our road-way. Then I lift my wife up and deposit her in it, and wheel her across, she declaring it to be the most charming ride of her life, and wishing our friends at home could only see us now. "Would n't they laugh?" Then we wheel over the boys and the dog, and finally the baggage—and this is a faithful account of the way we reached our new home from the landing.

CHAPTER XXII.

WE ARRIVE AT OUR NEW HOME—FIRST NIGHT'S EXPERIENCE.

THE house was of the architecture peculiar to the South —one-story, the roof high in the center and descending on all four sides, forming a cover for the immense gallery, or porch. It was double, with a large hall running through the center, and double-parlors on each side. Once, evidently, it had been a home of some pretentions—the finish of the wood-work, what was left of the mantle-pieces, with

many other marks about the premises indicated this. The yard, with its shrubbery, its beautiful box-alder trees, and here and there a broken piece of china, or mirror, bore testimony to the fact that people had once lived here who knew how to live. But what a wreck it presented now!—great doors, split from top to bottom as with an ax; scarcely an unbroken piece of glass remaining in the windows; not a door with an effective lock on it; all the hearths torn out, leaving great gaping holes, large enough to admit any one who might care to disturb our night's sleep!

Upon entering we discovered a black girl, scouring the paint. She scanned us from head to foot and then asked:

"Is you de new folks?"

"Yes."

"Lor', I's see'd many a Yankee so'g'er—hab cooked for 'em, but I nebber see'd a Yankee 'oman afore, an' dey tole me many a time Yankee 'omen had ho'ns,"—then, as if thinking aloud, "She looks 'zackly like any of 'em, only more delicate like."

On inquiring we found this to be the woman Adjutant Johnson had procured to do the work about the house. She told us her name was Jane.

Jane proved a character, and her quaint stories of plantation life, incidents of the war, etc., furnished us many an evening's entertainment.

Our first night's sojourn in our new home, thus open, many of the doors entirely off their hinges, admitting the straggling, half-starved dogs of the neighborhood, in search of some thing to eat (even in the best room it was necessary to hang blankets, where a door or window once was: our own bed and our children's crib put up temporarily in this room, and a few scattered pieces of furniture, which had preceded us, giving a familiar air to the place, making us feel that it was home, or that we must think so, at least)—

that first night, I say, is one that will be remembered by us always.

Being very tired from our tramp to the house from the landing, having no thoughts but those most pleasing from our fresh steamboat experience of Southern people, knowing nothing, dreaming nothing of the bitterness which was already felt toward us by our neighbors—after some hours chat with Adjutant Johnson (who, hearing of our arrival, had come from the Hebron plantation to welcome us)—we retired and fell into a profound sleep.

Sounds heard around the house as of persons walking and talking in undertones, the firing of guns, and an occasional human howl, wakened and excited me. I do not think I had the feeling of fear, but certainly I grew nervous and wondered at these strange noises. Nor could I again sleep, so, getting up, I went out upon the gallery and there met Adjutant Johnson, also nervous and restless. He told me that there was an average of one or two murders committed in the village every week.

"Did you hear those guns? Perhaps they each sent a soul to its long home."

There was no more going to sleep that night, but a long visit with Johnson instead, and very early in the morning I made my first purchase in the village, viz.: a pound of nails and a hatchet, with which, and the stray planks scattered about, I barricaded windows and doors, so that on our second night there were two rooms in the house which could not have been readily entered.

I asked the merchant of whom I bought the hatchet and nails:

"What was the disturbance last night?"

"One of the Northern men who has recently settled here brought in some negro labor from Vicksburg on a night boat, and the mischievous boys in town got among them and stampeded them."

"But there were gun-shots. What did the firing mean?"

"One negro was shot in the affair, I believe."

"Have they been arrested?"

"Who? the negroes?"

"No, the parties who perpetrated the outrage."

"Oh, no! these things are very common here; boys will be boys. For myself, I regret it very much—don't consider it treating the new-comers just right; but there seems to be no remedy for it."

"But will there be no effort to arrest the murderer of the negro?"

"Well, I reckon not. The county-seat is eighteen miles back from the river. There are no officers of the law here at all. Even if any one was disposed to bother himself about having the parties arrested, the boys would worry him so, he would be only too glad to give it up."

The merchant said "worry" with an emphasis and an expression, as if it meant volumes, and then his speech was cautious, and delivered in an undertone. Evidently "the boys" were a power, which the merchant did not care to invoke against himself, and he seemed fearful of being overheard by some one.

"This, then, it seems, is not the unfrequent mode of welcoming immigration, and if any effort should be made to put a stop to it, the boys would 'worry' the party who attempted it," I said.

"Yes, that is true."

"What a fearful condition of things this discloses!" I exclaimed. "That a sentiment like this exists is bad enough, but that the good element of society do not raise a voice against it, as would seem from what you say, is appalling. No opposition is its virtual indorsement, and being thus indorsed, how it will grow, and what a blight it will put on the community! And then I told the merchant how tenderly emigration was cared for in the East and West; how it was shielded by the powerful arm of

the law, so that no harm could come to it; how that neither in purse nor person, wherever this life-giving stream flowed, was it allowed to suffer the loss of a penny or a single hair. That is just what is wanted here," I continued, "and yet, by your own story, there is the very opposite of it. If this is the custom in sections of country where labor is comparatively abundant, how much more necessary is it here, where really no labor system exists, and where there is nothing but a crude mass of a recently enfranchised race which has to be molded, as it were; and upon their treatment much will depend, as to whether they will become instruments of good or evil. Being free, there is nothing to compel them to remain in any particular section of the country, and they will naturally seek locations where they will be justly treated; so that, aside from the right of the thing, and viewed simply in the light of policy, violence toward them is bad, because it will not only prevent others from coming, but will drive those already here away. If they should prove to be fair laborers, they will now be valuable to the whole community, instead of, as formerly, when they were slaves, only enriching the particular individual whose property they were. If an emigrant from a foreign shore adds a thousand dollars to the wealth of the country, as is the estimate, he adds it to the particular locality where he settles. The abolition of slavery was, so to speak, so much black immigration, and the black labor already here, as well as that which will yet come, is worth, to the community, one thousand dollars a head, so that the affair of last night, and which you say is very common here, has not only destroyed a human soul, but it has robbed the community of that sum. It has done vastly more than this; sooner or later this state of affairs will be known abroad, which will put an end to any further capital coming here, and even those already here, the old settlers as well as the newcomers, will find it next to impossible to get labor from

abroad. Are the black people so abundant here that immigration can be thus treated?" I asked.

"Oh, no, labor is very scarce; there is n't half enough here."

"If this inhuman treatment is not put a stop to at once," I exclaimed, "it will take chains to bring more labor here, and it would be better for your people to put sign-boards along your river-front, on which should be inscribed, in large letters, which can be plainly seen from the decks of the passing steamboats, 'No capital or immigration wanted here.' That 's what this sort of treatment means, and it is only a fair and honorable course, if it can not be stopped at once, to publish it, so that if there are settlers here in the future, they can 't say they came here without a warning.

"I speak with much feeling," I said; "I have located here, have invested money here, and expect to make this my home. I am astounded to find the condition of things which your statement discloses, and while it is not my purpose to take any part in public affairs, whenever great wrongs like this come to my notice, I must speak plainly my sentiments to individuals. But you are an old settler, and will you not take hold of this, will you not talk to other good citizens? Certainly, if the good element will put its heads together, this evil can be arrested before it has worked incalculable harm to the community."

"Well, it is wrong, but I do n't believe the 'boys' will listen to any body. When they get on the rampage they are so mischievous."

There was nothing in the merchant's manner to give me much hope that my words would be of avail. In fact, he cautioned me in an undertone, and with evident fear in his eye, against "pitching into the boys too lively," as it would be just like the rascals to get after me; but I, nevertheless, resolved to speak plainly on the subject as often as the opportunity presented itself, else I myself would be-

come a party to what was thrilling my soul with horror, and to what I could plainly see would administer a destructive blow to the county.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WE SUFFER FROM BAD ADVICE AND INEFFICIENT LABOR.

"You made a great mistake," said Adjutant Johnson, in having our freight landed at the wharf-boat. It should have been left at our own landing."

"Tyler advised it," I replied. "I did n't suppose he would mislead us."

"It certainly was a mistake. I could have handled and stored away our entire outfit from our own landing in a single day, and here I have been hauling with both teams since our arrival, now twelve days, and the freight is n't over one-quarter up.

"It is breaking down our team and discouraging the men, as they are almost certain to bog down crossing the slough in the rear of the new levee you had so much trouble in getting over with your family last evening, and they are frequently out until late in the night in consequence of these detentions. Not only that, but our hay and corn is being much damaged by having to unload and load it up again in the slough.

"Our freight bill is twelve hundred and fifty dollars, and Tyler has added three hundred and twelve dollars and a half landing charges. Twenty-five per cent. added to the freight bill is his profit."

"This is fearful. We will have to look out how we take advice in the future."

"It is quite evident that we have not only been seriously misled, but we have been badly fleeced," said Adjutant Johnson.

Before we got this lot of freight up, I felt strongly inclined to sue somebody for damages; but ere that the sad conviction was forcing itself upon me that there were no courts open for our class; that a new-comer had no rights which any one respected; that we were simply regarded as so many fat geese tied in the market, and every passing Southerner was at liberty to pluck a feather from us.

Day after day we tugged through the mire to haul this lot of freight away; night after night we worked to get our teams out of the bogs of the slough; great was the strain upon the mules and the men—precious time lost, too, because it was towards the latter end of the plowing season, and yet we had not struck a furrow.

Not a day less than a month was thus consumed with two four-mule teams and two men to each wagon in doing what, if we had been correctly advised, would have taken but a single day!

I calculate that this leaf in our experience cost us, in direct money, not less than fifteen hundred dollars, to say nothing of the loss of time from the legitimate duties of farming, the strain on our mules, and its demoralizing influence on the men, which were indirect losses, impossible to correctly estimate—all to put the paltry sum of three hundred and twelve dollars and a half into the pocket of the wharf-boat owner!

Adjutant Johnson said, with a howl:

"This is encouraging immigration with a vengeance!"

I asked Tyler where we had best have our freight landed, and received his reply, "On the wharf-boat, by all means," in the presence and hearing of a number of the wharf-boat loungers, all of whom must have known he was misdirecting us, and yet not one of them warned us of the fearful trap. It could not be said, then, that the wharf-boat

owner was alone responsible for this costly affair. The fact is, he was less so than the bystanders, because my question had excited his cupidity. If the freight could be landed with him, there was the handsome profit; but with the bystanders there was no such incentive.

Nor could it be said, "This was not their business, but simply a matter between Tyler and myself," for the reason that any thing which would have a tendency to influence the tide of immigration, then flowing into the country, unfavorably, was the business of every citizen of the county. If they saw as much as a straw thrown in its way, it was their duty to see it promptly removed.

Stranger that I was, I had asked to be guided aright, and the very best evidence that I had confidence, and was willing to trust the people, was to be found in the fact that I had so asked, and the bystanders, who had allowed us to be so misguided, were just as guilty as would be those who would allow a ticket agent in New York to sell an emigrant a passage to Philadelphia, by way of San Francisco, without warning him of the swindle.

Neither at that time, when a word of warning from any one of the bystanders, dropped in my ear, if he had not cared to speak openly, would have saved us this never-to-be-forgotten experience, nor afterwards, when we were toiling day after day and night after night, for a month, to do the work of a single day, was there a word of sympathy expressed for us, or a breath of condemnation against the author of the affair, even though many of the citizens passed the slough, and saw us frequently up to our knees in the mud and water, with our wagons sunk to their hubs, and mules and drivers floundering about in the mire, besmeared with it, and wet from head to foot.

I asked Adjutant Johnson about the old hands we had seen on the Hebron plantation—were they all there yet?"

"Only old Cato and his family!"

"What became of the rest?"

"They mostly went to the Hambleton plantation, I understand."

From Cato I learned that the people in the neighborhood had told them they would have to vacate the quarters to make room for the new hands we would bring with us, so they had reluctantly moved away.

"Powerful choice hands dey was, too," said Cato. "Dey hated mightily to lebe de ole place, but dey done gone an' made corntracs for de year."

Well, here was a loss, to be sure. These hands were to be our main reliance, our wheel-horses, so to speak. We had counted on keeping them. What should we do? Could we call them back? No, they had, no doubt, as Cato said, made contracts, and were beyond our reach.

The planters in the neighborhood might have thought they were doing us a service by telling this labor to "vacate," but it certainly was not a service; on the contrary, I felt that they could not well have dealt us a severer blow.

We were to blame, perhaps, ourselves, in not seeing the laborers immediately after our purchase, and making an engagement with them for the year; but we never dreamed for a moment that any one would interfere with them. Having bought the place, of course we would want labor for it. What was really there was so much start, and what more natural than to suppose we would want to retain it?

A singular community this was, that would not open its mouth to save us from landing our freight two miles away, and which yet became officious in our absence to clear our cabins of the labor in them!

We had told no one we were going to bring labor with us. In fact, our programme in this regard, had not been mentioned on the wharf-boat at all, but had been decided on after leaving there, so that for aught the people knew, we would look for all our labor in the immediate vicinity,

and yet it had been given out as coming from us that we should want our cabins—hence the exodus.

Of course we had not the least claim in the world on these people. They were free and at liberty to make their contracts when and where they chose, but we had found them on the place, and the fact of their being there, old hands as they were, showed an attachment to it on their part, and nothing could be more natural, therefore, than for us to feel that they would want to stay. And it seems they did want to stay, that they had left reluctantly, and but for the statements of our meddlesome neighbors, they would still be on the place and at our service.

It was a cruel disappointment to feel that we had lost them, more so because Johnson told us he was dubious about the labor he had brought down.

"The whites are a turbulent set, and the fact is," he said, "I am satisfied there is n't a farmer among them; three of them are painters, two printers, one professional bill-poster, two tailors, and two shoemakers, and all a set of loafers. The overseer, Mr. Hunter, put them to chopping up the dead trees which had fallen in the fields, and the first day he found them hugging the side of a log, with a number of greasy packs of cards, at play. They declared that wood-chopping was harder work than they cared to engage in, told the overseer to give the negroes that kind of work, and let them have something easier; so he put them to breaking down the tall weeds with clubs, and raking them up in heaps and burning them, thus getting the land ready for the plows. But they are the veriest eye-servants, and what little work they do is shabby. It is impossible to please them with food, and twice they have rebelled at the table, and dashed what was set before them on the ground. They make the night hideous with their noises, in the barracks which I've had arranged for them, and in the morning it is impossible to punch them out before the sun is an hour high.

"Their influence on the blacks is demoralizing, as the latter take their labor for the standard, and when I rebuke them they retort that they are doing more than the white folks." Such was a brief outline of the situation, as Johnson gave it.

With the negroes under this influence the thawing-out process was sending to the surface all that was objectionable in their characters, and in their fondness for imitation they seemed bent in outdoing the white squad in examples of laziness and acts of lawlessness. Only three weeks ago they were hungry enough to gnaw a bone, and now, simply because "de white folks dashed out de grub," forsooth out theirs went.

It soon became evident to us that the overseer was a failure. Either he was naturally lazy, or he caught the contagion from his lazy surroundings, and Adjutant Johnson's health fluctuated, so that he was forced to keep his room most of the time. Thus, with an incompetent overseer and an invalid assistant, my hands were full.

I immediately wrote to Dobson, stating the situation minutely, and telling him to bring down twenty-five black laborers, giving him distinctly the class of hands desired, namely, "contraband," and all farmers, and urging him to put them to the severest test on this point, and to be in a hurry. It would take at least twenty days for Dobson to get here with this relief, even with the greatest expedition, and my letter was so pressing I hardly thought he would fail to make speed, even though it was his wont never to be in a hurry.

I did not doubt Dobson's ability to get the hands, as we had so recently dealt in the same market, and found it to be overstocked; but thinking we might procure some relief sooner, I dispatched Johnson to Vicksburg, to see what could be done there in the way of procuring help.

It made my heart bleed to see the poor sick boy start off on this journey. He was now but a skeleton in flesh, and

what he wanted was the tenderest nursing; that, in this balmy Southern atmosphere, would pull him through, if any thing could, but here was our enterprise in a fair way to be swamped for want of labor. With our worthless overseer, it was impossible for me to get away, and there was no alternative but for Johnson to go.

His enfeebled condition seemed but to add fuel to his ardor to do every thing which could be done in human power to make our scheme a winning one. Right nobly had he seconded my every effort. His heart and soul were in the enterprise, and a hint on my part was all he needed to start him off with as much speed and as light a mood as he could possibly have shown if he had been a strong, healthy man.

It was plain our overseer was doing us no good. He was one of those frauds in the human form, to be found everywhere, who was always going to begin—one of your to-morrow brothers. Day after day he would promise me that the next should see our plows started, until my patience became exhausted. It was rapidly approaching March, and not a furrow had been turned. Only about forty days remained to plow nine hundred acres. Our situation was alarming.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WE COMMENCE PLOWING.

After a restless night in thinking over our situation, I rode up to the plantation early in the morning and demanded of the overseer that he at once start the plows, but it was three in the afternoon before the thing was

finally accomplished; and even then it would not have been done but for "Billy," who, with the exception of old Clara, the cook Johnson engaged after his arrival here, was really the only one on the place whose heart seemed to be at all in the work. But it was a sickly start at plowing. The mules were in high metal from their long rest, and there was but a single man in our black squad who was a cotton hand, and but two who were farmers at all. These two moved off without difficulty; but the rest! Now they had the plow down, now the plow had them down, their mules plunged off on all sorts of tangents, hame-strings flew right and left, three or four plow-beams snapped square in two, in what seemed to be the frantic effort of these novices to get down into China. Soon the mules became fretted under their clumsy handling; several of them tore themselves out of the harness and scampered off until they hid themselves in the tall weeds; others frothed at the mouth, and under every piece of leather showed a broad lather of sweat, their tails hugged their bodies so close that you could not have gotten a shaving under them, and their ears lay back viciously against their necks—now they were dragging driver, plowman, and plow in headlong speed, and now they refused to budge. There was no medium with them, it was either the speed of the wind or a sudden halt—this just as the plow spun on the surface or buried itself to the hilt, so to speak, in the earth. Finally, after three hours of this frantic tugging, and when men and mules were worn down, I called a halt. I need hardly say it was a sorry spectacle. With the exception of the furrows plowed by the two farmers, the piece of ground looked as if it might have been the arena of a bull-fight, or the rooting-place of a drove of hogs. Four plows out of sixteen were carried to the blacksmith shop for repairs—one of them was so wrenched that the handles and beam were in a straight line; the half of a side of lace-leather was consumed in renewing hame-strings;

there were three sore-shouldered mules, all of them showing huge welts from the lashings of the drivers; three of those home-made double-trees were snapped in two; there were four disabled clevices and lap-rings; and a wilted appearance generally of men and mules was, briefly told, the spectacle.

But, such as it was, it was the commencement of the plowing season, and that piece of an afternoon's work not only toned down the mules, but it put the men in the most docile mood possible. There was no murmuring that night over the "grub," and no hideous noises in either quarters or barracks. Billy told me, next morning, it was the quietest night he had experienced.

Before I went home, I discharged the overseer, and put Billy in immediate command, with instructions to have all the damages of the afternoon repaired that night, so as to be ready to commence plowing in earnest bright and early in the morning.

It was after midnight when the blacksmith and carpenter closed their shops, having gotten the damaged plows, double-trees, etc., in trim again. All the livelong evening the fire glowed in the furnace, the hammer sounded its clear notes on the anvil, great volumes of sparks rose from the chimney, and, keeping the blacksmith company, was the sound of the carpenter's plane and hatchet.

Aunt Clara told me, next day:

"Las' night 'pear'd like ole times; dat was jis de way day use to do 'fo' de wa'."

I determined to set an example of industry—hoping thus to infuse a little life into our excuse for labor—and the next morning at daylight found me again at the plantation, my voice sounding through the quarters for all hands to turn out. To my pleasant surprise they were not long in responding to my call. Evidently their effort of yesterday had tamed them; then the discharge of the overseer, the busy hum of industry the night previous, and my being so

promptly on the ground now, told them that I meant business, and, if they wanted to please me, they must take a livelier pace than had been their wont under the easy-going Hunter.

I made them stand before me in military style; then I took down their names and told them Billy would call the roll at sunrise, and those who were not on hand to answer the call would forfeit half a day's wages. When pay-day came, which would be now shortly, I said, they would expect their pay promptly, but they must, in the meantime, give me prompt, willing, and faithful service.

While I was yet at my lecture, Clara's breakfast-bell rang.

The whites and blacks took their meals in separate rooms, and I joined the white squad. Clara had given them some biscuit, boiled potatoes, fried pork, and a cup of coffee. The blacks had corn-bread instead of biscuit, and no potatoes; otherwise their fare was the same as the whites. I never enjoyed a meal more in my life than I did this early morning breakfast.

I went to the field myself with the hands on this day, and for weeks thereafter; now taking the lead with the plow gang, now assisting in logging, and now knocking down the weeds before the plows, all the time performing the duties and drudgery of a day-laborer—this until my hands became horny and my face bronzed; and when I took my meals, which I generally did with the hands, how I enjoyed the homely, wholesome food; and these were the days when I proved that the sleep of the laboring-man is sweet.

CHAPTER XXV.

INCIDENTS.

My two-mile ride, morning and evening, was the hardest thing I had to bear. I had to get up very early, in order to be at the plantation at sunrise. The two hours of sleep before the break of day are always the most refreshing. Laboring-man that I now was, I needed this very much. But, of course, to be on time at the plantation, I had to deprive myself of it. I took many a little nap, however, while riding up to the plantation. It is something wonderful how much sleep one can actually get on horse-back, especially if he can give his horse the rein, letting him travel over some frequented route. My horse had the route by heart, so all I had to do was to let him follow his own direction, and doze away until he brought me up with a round turn at my office in the plantation quarters.

Whatever might have been, or might be in the future, the experience of others, mine told me that I ought to be on the ground night and day. We must get to living on the plantation as soon as possible. True, I had rendered good service many a night in being so near the new levee, when our teams were wont to "bog down." But this unfortunate and expensive experience would soon be over. It is true, if we had not been living there this would have daily called me to the neighborhood, so that as the thing had resulted, it might be said we had perched on the bank of this slough so that I might be at hand to assist by night in extricating our teams from the mire.

As for the neighborhood itself, it had its chapter of incidents, for both my wife and myself. I will here gather up some of these from our correspondence of those days. The

following is from a letter written by Mrs. Harding: . . . "After looking around among our packages, I discovered many articles left behind that we needed sadly, and many utterly useless and ornamental things, which, on the other hand, were much in our way. You remember when I made up our little parcel of ornaments, I thought they would come in good part to adorn our new home; but any thing beyond the bare necessities is sadly out of keeping here, and I wish they were safely back in their old resting-places, where they would fill your eyes with pleasure, instead of calling up the memories of past days with us, which makes us sad in the thought that they may never return.

"Our sick friend"—meaning Adjutant Johnson—"thought if I would make him a cup of good home coffee, it would be so refreshing, as he had been living on whatever he could pick up since his arrival. He said he was actually getting homesick over the thought. Of course, as soon as the desire was expressed, I made haste to gratify it, but found, upon examination, that among the missing household utensils was our coffee-mill. Turning to Jane, I asked: 'Why, how have you managed to grind our coffee?' 'Lor', missus,' she said, 'us darkies has done larn to 'trive since de wa', an' we nebber stops to think of we 's got any thing to do wid or no. I jist pounded de coffee in a rag wid de hatchet, an' ax no questions.' I told her I supposed that was the reason we had had such poor coffee. 'Step over to that house,' I said, 'and ask the lady who lives there if she will be so kind as to loan us her mill for a very few moments, and explain to her that ours is on the way—was left by mistake—and that a sick gentleman wants some coffee.' 'Lor', missus,' Jane replied, 'dat aint no Yankee lady.' 'Well, Jane, what of that,' I said, 'she will certainly have no objection to such a slight request.' As Jane disappeared from the door, I heard her muttering to herself, 'missus don't know dese folks down here; no Yankee 'bout dem,' etc.

"In a moment a violent outburst of angry words greeted me, and stepping to the door to see from whence they came, what was my consternation to witness the lady of the house, standing in her door, which faced us, talking in the most excited manner to Jane: "Go, back, you nigger,' she screamed out, 'tell that d—— Yankee woman I have two very nice coffee-mills, very nice ones, but not for her to use.' Jane replied, 'I done tole her you was no Yankee.' 'You did, ha! well you told her right, you miserable black nigger you; and tell her now she had better watch the cistern she makes her coffee from,' and then she gave utterance to a demoniacal laugh—'ha! ha! ha! arsenic is good diet for Yankees!'

"All this I distinctly heard, and as she saw me standing so near she seemed to talk at me rather than to poor Jane.

"The next morning, as we had no matches, Jane, took two chips and went over to 'tote' a coal of fire, to kindle her own kitchen-fire, thinking to meet no one but Aunt Chloe, the venerable old negress, who worked for this our next-door neighbor. But the woman was on hand, and greeted Jane with threats and abuses for coming straight from those d—— Yankees into her presence, and expressed herself as sorry for the poor creature, that she had not taken her advice, and kept away from us. We were a pack of mud-sills, come down into this country to rob and plunder from them what they had left from 'the wa'.' 'Yes,' she said, 'I will let them have a coal of fire, but it will be in the shape of a torch touched to the house some dark night; only' (she said as if the thought had just struck her, and as if to herself) 'that would be burning up in part the property of one of we uns, as, thank God, the house do n't belong to they uns.' "

A few days after this, Mrs. Harding accompanied me to the Hebron plantation on horseback. There were no roads distinguishable, nor was there a fence for miles around to mark any particular lot. We returned in the evening

by the same route we had taken in the morning, and found a note awaiting us, of the most insolent nature, from our neighbor, saying that her door-yard had never before been used as a public road; probably we knew no better—she supposed we did not—but we must desist from riding again through her yard, or suffer the consequences!

Was it any wonder that our almost daily experience made us feel like drawing closer and closer within ourselves?

But there was a change in the tide of affairs with this woman. Somewhat later, she was led to exclaim, 'There must be some good Yankees.' Her husband was seized with a terrible attack of hemorrhage. The only practicing physician in the country was called in, and upon his arrival advised sending in for the Federal surgeon, referring to Dobson, saying "he 'll know just what is best to do." That great assuager of passion and destroyer of prejudice, Impending Death, spoke in the invalid's critical state; so Dobson was sent for, and upon his earnest solicitation I accompanied him. The poor man seemed to be in almost a dying condition. After a thorough examination into the case, Dobson prescribed and also named the diet suitable. When about to take our leave, I offered my services as nurse, and said:

"If there is any thing among our fresh supplies that would be acceptable to your sick husband, you must not hesitate to make known your wants. Whatever we have, which he may crave, is at your disposal."

I was taken at my word, and frequent was the requisition made upon our time and larder.

About this period, I had an experience which, even as I now think of it, notwithstanding the lapse of years, sends my blood chilled to my heart. It was nearly ten o'clock, and I was preparing to retire for the night. As was my habit, I put my hand into my pocket for the wallet which contained our money (about twelve hundred dollars in large bills) to place it under the pillow. But it was gone! I quickly searched all my pockets; repeating the operation several

times, in the vain hope that I might yet find it in some one of them. Then I turned them inside out, feeling for it as if it were an atom, instead of the bulky thing it was in fact; but all to no purpose; and finally I abandoned the search.

"Our money is gone!" I exclaimed, in agony, to Mrs. Harding. Then I tried to collect my thoughts. When had I last seen it? As near as I could remember, I had taken it out last that morning at the village store to pay for some shoes. It might be I had left it on the counter. If so, the chances were, it having been so early in the morning, and no customers in the store, the merchant had found it, and put it away until I should call for it. The more I thought of it the stronger the impression grew in my mind that such was the case, until I felt there could be no doubt about it, and so I said: "Shall I go over immediately and get it, or shall I wait until morning?"

Mrs. Harding answered: "Wait until morning, by all means. I have heard gun-shots during the evening, and loud outcries. There is no telling what disturbance you might stumble upon. It is really not safe for you to go over now."

But I felt I should not sleep if I went to bed until I had found the money, or at least made a search for it. My mind told me it was almost certain to be at the store. The dilemma was uncomfortable. To venture out was dangerous, while to remain would result in a sleepless night, full of anxious suspense.

But the more I thought the matter over, the more I felt it my duty to go; and so I finally resolved to brave the danger. If our lost treasure was where I thought it was, I should soon have it in my possession; if it was not there, I would at least know this. My belief had been so strong that we were coming amongst friends when we came South, that, beyond a couple of fowling-pieces, I had not a weapon in our house. So I sallied forth without so much

as a pocket-knife about me, Mrs. Harding continuing to protest that I ought not to go.

I reached the store, without adventure. It was closed, and the lights were out, indicating that all hands had retired for the night. I rapped until some one showed a head, looking down over the upper gallery. It was the merchant himself. I made known my errand, and his reply was:

"I have not seen your pocket-book at all."

So, with an apology for disturbing him at such an unseasonable hour, I started on my homeward journey with a heavy heart. The sky was partly overcast with clouds, through which the moon would break at intervals, bringing out hitherto dark objects in bold relief. During one of these intervals, I noticed a crowd of men at a considerable distance, near one of the whisky-shops, from the door of which shot forth now a pale light, now a bright one, just as the clouds in their movement either covered the face of the moon or exposed it.

The crowd appeared to be swaying to and fro, as if stirred by some unusual excitement, when suddenly came the sharp crack of a pistol, and a distinct cry of—

"Oh! I'm murdered!"

Then followed a rapid scattering of the crowd, as if some were pursued and others pursuers. The rush seemed to be coming my way, so I walked with a livelier pace, thinking that, being so far beyond them, I could gain our door-yard before they could reach me.

Again came the crack of a pistol, and another cry of anguish, this time much nearer; and, as the moon came out again from under a cloud, I could plainly see half a dozen persons not ten rods in my rear, following me as fast as they could run.

I was certainly pursued, perhaps mistaken for one of the crowd which had broken up at the whisky-shops, perhaps recognized by "the mischievous boys." It was plainly not

safe to let the crowd come up with me; even if they had no designs upon me, I might fall a victim before, in their headlong fury, and enraged with drink, they could discover their mistake. It would be madness for me to stand and undertake to defend myself, even if I had any weapons of defense. Six enraged, half-drunken, armed men were almost like so many savage beasts. What could I—a single unarmed man—although ever so prudent and sober, do against such odds?

While these thoughts were flashing through my mind, another pistol-shot came, and this time the ball sung past my ear.

I was indeed pursued!

Then came a race for life. I could almost feel the hot breath of the pursuers on my blanched cheek.

I had to make a little circuit, which—not being familiar with the ground, while my pursuers evidently were familiar with it—enabled them to execute a flank movement on me, so that when I came to the new levee I could distinctly hear their panting breaths close behind me. I struck into the fresh, rain-saturated soil, only to sink nearly to my knees at every stride. At this moment my fate seemed to be sealed. What with running, with fright, and with the effort to get through the mud, my strength was nearly gone. Evidently I had not enough left to cross the levee. So, putting forth what remained in me, I threw myself down its steep side, a distance of eighteen feet, into the water and mud below. The douse into the water had the effect to revive me a little, and so I floundered along in it, until I reached our door-yard, and finally our gallery, where I sank down exhausted, and where Mrs. Harding found me as pale as a ghost, and with my garments torn, and covered from head to foot with mud and water.

I shall never forget the unearthly yell my pursuers sent up, when my sudden disappearance down the side of the levee baffled their pursuit; and I shall never cease to feel

thankful to that black cloud which shut in the face of the moon just the instant before I took that headlong leap down the levee's side, thus covering the earth with deep darkness, all the more decided because of the bright moonlight which had just preceded it, and thus shutting me completely out of view.

A bath and stimulants revived me after a while, and my thankfulness for my narrow escape for the moment completely overshadowed our loss. I had barely escaped, it is true; but still I had escaped without a scratch. It would be a lesson to me for the future not to expose myself at night. As for the loss of our money, I would try and not have it occur again. It would take nearly my year's salary to return it to the Dobson enterprise. But it was perhaps well spent, viewing it in the light of so much experience-money. There must be rigid economy in the household to make good this large sum. The old clothes would have to do for the present, and for a long stretch in the future. There must be no purchase of bonnets or hats, and fashion-plates must have the cold shoulder. There would have to be some "shinning" done, and some little bills would have to remain unpaid for a year, or until we began realizing on our crops.

Thus reasoning, I lifted up the pillow to get my night-shirt, when what should I behold but my lost pocket-book, safe in its nightly resting-place! So much of a habit had this become, that I had deposited it there instinctively.

I never said any thing about this night's experience in the village, and do not know whether I was recognized by my pursuers, or whether I was mistaken for one of the crowd from the drinking-shop.

I inquired of the merchant, when I visited his store two days later, as to the affair, and was told that it was the "mischievous boys on a rampage."

"Any body killed?" I asked.

"One negro killed, and two wounded," he answered.

"Were there any arrests?"

"Of what use are arrests? The boys will have their mischief."

And the merchant told but the truth.

The "boys" would and did have their mischief, even at the expense of human life, and at the sacrifice of the best interests of the country. If this state of affairs prevailed throughout the South, I thought, it would see many dark days before it could ever see brighter ones. This was evidently to be the order of things in this locality, and we had a long and wearisome journey before us. Our pathway would lead, as it were, through the "valley of the shadow of death." How many of us would live to see the promised land beyond?

CHAPTER XXVI.

DOBSON'S ARRIVAL.

It was our fate to expect Dobson some time before he came. This we could ill afford to do. The season was creeping on apace, and there was a deal of work before us. Our worst bramble-grown patches, the most tedious part of our work, were as yet untouched. I had gotten things on the plantation in tolerable shape only by a great effort, and it was difficult to keep them so. I had calculated on being able to hold out until Dobson should be due, and when that time came and no Dobson, my heart sank within me. As each succeeding day passed, and he did not appear with his reinforcements, our hirelings became impatient, and showed further signs of demoralization. With the uncertainty of river navigation, I had given him two or

three days' margin, but now nearly a week beyond the time fixed had dragged its slow length along, and yet he was not come.

Every day, and, indeed, several times each day, great steamboats would come puffing down the river, when I would exclaim, "There at last is our help." Then I would gallop out to the landing in high spirits, expecting the boat to stop, but only to be disappointed.

Finally, after a week of painful suspense, Dobson, with his family, arrived. But, beyond two hostlers for his stud of horses, which he brought with him, he had not a single man!

He arrived at night, remaining on the wharf-boat until daylight, and came over to the house just as I was starting off to the plantation.

In my eagerness, thinking he might possibly have overlooked my instructions to have the labor landed on the plantation, remembering how the "mischievous boys" were in the habit of stampeding immigration landed at the village, and shuddering at the thought of the result to us if ours should be dispersed in that way—with a vague fear, too, in my heart, arising perhaps from this thought, perhaps from some premonition of the almost stunning blow, which the answer to my question was about to administer—my first inquiry, after the customary greeting, was:

"Where have you left the labor you brought down?"

"I brought no labor," he replied.

"You brought no labor, did you say?"

"Yes."

"Did you receive my letter ordering more hands?"

"No; did you write me on that subject?"

"Yes, indeed; I wrote you in full, ordering twenty-five hands."

"Do we need help so badly?" he asked, anxiously.

"Need it? Failure stares us in the face unless we get it. Was there plenty of help at home?" I asked.

"For aught I know there was. I have two hostlers; I can rub along with one, the other can go up to the plantation and go to work."

"Send him along," I said, and turned away sick at heart. Some one must go North and get the labor we had expected. Who should it be? I thought of Adjutant Johnson, and went at once to see him. The poor fellow had evidently experienced a rough night. He seemed so weak that a puff of wind would blow him over. In his enfeebled condition, I could hardly make up my mind to tell him of our disappointment. But his quick preception read instantly, from my tell-tale face, that something had gone awry.

"What is the matter, Mr. Harding?" he cried, instantly. "You look as if you 'd lost your last friend."

"Not quite so bad as that, my dear fellow," I replied, "as long as you 're with us," and then I told him how my letter had miscarried, and it was a consolation to me to see that his disappointment was not less than mine. I was spending nearly fourteen hours out of the twenty-four on the plantation, leading the field-labor and supervising every thing that was done. It seemed to be utterly impossible for me to get away. I had taken so much of the burden of the plantation on my shoulders that I could not lay it down until we had a reinforcement of labor. "No, you must remain," Johnson said, "and bear the load." It would be at least fourteen days before we could expect relief. It was by no means certain that our present force would not stampede in a body when they found Dobson had not brought any reinforcements.

"How would it do to write to Mr. Gale, and ask him to employ some one to procure the labor and bring it down?" I asked.

Johnson replied instantly: "It won't do at all!" And then his brows knit for a moment, as if in deep thought. Soon I could see his bosom heave, just as a person's wil when about to volunteer a difficult undertaking; then, as

if he had made up his mind to it, his eyes lit up, and he exclaimed:

"No, there 's no use thinking of it, you can 't go; there 's nothing left but for me to go. I 'll get ready and start at once, and with God's help," he said, raising his eyes reverently, "I will bring you reinforcements within two weeks!"

So it was decided that I should remain at my post, try and hold the labor together, and keep things running as best I could, while Johnson, invalid as he was, should go for the help. Reluctantly, and with many misgivings, I assented to his part of the programme. And then this brave boy got up from his bed of sickness to make his preparations for a journey of three thousand miles, at a season of the year when the weather was inclement, knowing that he would have to work hard to get his laborers together, and then extend an unceasing watch over them on his way down—all this, when he was really not able to ride two miles in his saddle! And all this he undertook without a murmur.

It has occurred to me since that he must have known this journey would be his death-blow; that undoubtedly, while knitting his brow, as I have mentioned, he was revolving this very thought in his mind; but, notwithstanding the almost certain result to himself, he had determined to accomplish this task, and then, if necessary, as its penalty, lie down and die. In other words, to save a scheme which was absorbing his heart and soul from utter and complete failure, he would offer himself up as a sacrifice, and before the breath should leave his body he would bring us succor.

So he started on his journey, with courage shining in his undimmed eye, but with a quaver in his voice, an emaciated frame, and an unsteady step, showing how weak he was in fact. I thought of the candle in the socket when I gave him my parting word, and as I rode up to the planta-

tion that forenoon I forgot the hard task I had before me, in my sympathy for him, and my heart was filled with sadness.

It was a charming spring day—the meadow larks constantly flying up before me, sending forth their note of cheer; coveys of quail flushing up all about; and ducks splashing and quacking in the slough water in front of the levee along which my pathway lay. The willows fringing the bank of the river were just putting on their green. The atmosphere was fresh and bracing, the sun, with its grateful rays, dispelling the last vestige of chill from the air, and pausing just there, so that there should not be a breath of uncomfortable warmth, and making that happy medium between heat and cold, so seldom experienced outside of the semi-tropical regions, but so common here. The dewberry vines were dotting the fields with their white blossoms; patches of green cane were visible in the distance, and there were freedmen at work in the fields—some at the plow, others breaking down the enormous weed-growths which encumbered the plantations, raking them up into huge piles and then burning them, the huge volumes of fire and smoke shooting up into the air—the negroes all the time singing their rude farm melodies. Ordinarily, these sights and sounds would have filled me with pleasure, but in my present mood they jarred upon my feelings. A funeral dirge was constantly sounding in my ear; the wan face and feeble frame, with the unhealthy light in his eye, of my friend, who was now steaming up the river, were photographed in my mind. As often as I would try to make myself believe that his case was not, after all, so bad, there would come up that quavering voice, that unsteady step, that cold bony hand I had grasped at parting, and that whole frame bearing every mark of being thoroughly possessed by disease, with nothing in his favor but his indomitable will and courage, which had just started him on his Northern journey. Was

it not almost certain, having such will and determination, that with long-continued, careful nursing, under these genial skies, health would again send its glow through his frame? And was it not equally certain that these two weeks of exposure would carry him to his grave? I felt it to be so. Then had I not been guilty of his death in giving my consent to his making this trip?

Reader, this is no fancy sketch. Every line on each page of this book is true. My statements are simply those of incidents in my experience as a cotton-planter. This young man went into the army full of health. He left it, as thousands left it, a victim of camp dysentery. Notwithstanding his disease, he had remained in the service, and was only mustered out at the close of the war. The fact of his remaining in the service long after disease had stricken him showed the metal in his composition. He had a hard experience in getting our expedition down, and encountered rough treatment and fare until we had reached Hebron. We had taken him into our family, and Mrs. Harding was nursing him as tenderly as if he were our own child. We felt him to be improving when his trip to Vicksburg to procure labor was undertaken. That had done him harm. He was just recovering from that, however, and seemed to be gaining somewhat, that is, his paroxysms were less frequent and a little less violent, and in his breast the light of hope burned brightly. I felt that he could not die, and he seemed to think so, too, and spoke of his early recovery with perfect confidence, laid his plans for the summer, and dwelt upon how much he was going to help us when he got a little stronger. Now he was on this long hard journey!

Dobson's hostler had reached the plantation before me. Billy had given him a plow, and put him to work with the rest. It seems Dobson had not brought him all the way from home, but had picked him up at Memphis, and that he had been brought up in the cotton-field; he was there-

fore a valuable addition. He was one of those jolly, taking negroes, and had told of Dobson's arrival without reinforcements in such a droll manner as to heal much of the force of the general disappointment, although the hands were more or less surly much of the time, notwithstanding my report that I had dispatched Adjutant Johnson for relief, which we might expect to get at the end of two weeks.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE FIRST PAY-DAY, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

As a means of breaking the disappointment of Dobson's failure to our laborers, and bridging over, as it were, the period until Johnson's reinforcement should arrive, we decided to have a settlement, and to pay them their due, less the half which was to be reserved until the end of the year, according to the rules adopted by the Freedman's Bureau, then in authority in the South.

When we decided on this plan, I informed the hands of it. This had the effect, as we supposed it would, to put them in good humor. It had been my intention, as previously stated, not to settle with the white laborers until Dobson brought us relief, and then to pay them off and discharge them.

In engaging our force of laborers, we had contracted to pay them whatever wages were customary in the country where we were going. Eighteen dollars a month for first-class field-hands we found to be the usual price. This was three dollars higher than Dobson's estimate called for, and it would add eighteen hundred dollars to that estimate for the year, thus giving it another black eye. But as often as

these extra items of expense came up, and they were coming frequently, and from present indications would make a good round sum in the aggregate, I would think of our enormous profit at the end of the year. What did ten or fifteen or even twenty thousand dollars, more or less, matter in an enterprise where there was to be a profit of three hundred and fifty thousand dollars in four years? Besides, there was no help for this extra item of expense. It was the custom of the country. We had agreed to abide by that; and even if we had not so agreed, it would be unreasonable for us to expect to hold our labor at fifteen dollars a month, when all our neighbors were paying eighteen, or at least agreeing to pay eighteen, and jumping at the chance.

A month's work meant twenty-six days, and we found it to be the usual custom here to allow the laborers to take at least half of Saturday as a holiday, so that, at best, they worked but five and a half days out of seven. Some planters allowed the whole of Saturday as an extra inducement to get labor. This Saturday holiday, it seems, was a relic of slavery. During the cultivating season in the slave times, there was always plenty of leisure, and during that season it was customary for the slaves to have their Saturday holiday, when the women would do up their washing for the week, and the men would get passes to go to the village and sell their "crap" of eggs and poultry, or to visit their "took-up women" on the neighborhood plantations, or would lie idle about their own quarters.

When the picking season set in the Saturday holiday ceased. During this period, running from September frequently into March, it was work from Monday morning until Saturday night. But our hands, being up-country people, and knowing nothing of this native custom, worked all day Saturday, which made up in a small part for our deficiency in numbers and quality.

The plan of reserving half the pay until the end of the

year was the Government's, and was intended to accomplish a two-fold object, viz.: to secure the planter in the possession of his labor until his crop was made and gathered, and to prevent the freedmen from squandering all their wages as they earned them. The theory was, that each freedman, by this provision, would have a handsome little sum laid by, at the close of the year, and that this was a part of the necessary education to make them a thrifty people.

When Saturday came, our accounts were ready. We had made up for each man a statement showing his wages to date, then his purchases in the way of tobacco, shoes, clothing, etc.; then the difference, which was the balance due him. There was not a single man, either white or black, who had not already traded over half his wages, so that there was not really a cent of cash due them. We had found them, as before stated, ragged, and having clothed and shod them, they ought not in reason to have expected any thing. But they were a very unreasonable set, and particularly the whites, who plead hard for the balance due them.

"Pay us all, just this month," Mr. Harding, they one and all urged, "we must have a little cash to buy us such articles of necessity as you have n't got in your plantation store." And then they looked longingly, and like hungry persons, at the pile of greenbacks lying before me on my desk.

There was really no excuse for us to reserve the money due the whites until the end of the year, as they were not under the protection or government of the Freedman's Bureau, and as we did not intend to keep them a day after we got black labor to supply their places. Our only purpose, in the first place, in holding back any of their due, was to prevent them from running away and leaving us in the lurch. But there was nothing in their manner which indicated any such design; on the contrary, they talked as

if they intended to stay right along. So we paid them in full. As for the blacks, we paid each one of them a portion of what was due on their last half, and gave them a Freedman's Bureau ticket, bearing our signature, for the balance.

That night our entire white force, with the exception of two of the most worthless of the worthless batch, ran away, and that was the last we ever saw of any one of them. We told the two left behind they might go with the rest. Thus ingloriously ended our experiment in undertaking to cultivate cotton with white labor.

Billy came down to the house Sunday morning to bring us the information about the white labor, evidently expecting we should feel very bad over it. And it did annoy us, but it was only because the rascals had outwitted us.

Billy said: "It is no loss at all. They have hindered more than they have helped. Now I have nothing to do but to look after the blacks, and I really believe we can accomplish more labor with them alone, than we accomplished with both squads before. The whites have been the chief cause of the demoralization among the blacks, which has cost you so much trouble to arrest, and now that the latter are free from that influence, I believe we will get along splendidly."

As for Clara, when we saw her Monday, her black face beamed with delight, and she was grinning from ear to ear.

"I declar," said she, "it was a pow'ful riddance, dose white folks runnin' away. I's been used to bossin' niggers all my born days in der eatin', and kin git along wid dem fust rate, but dis was de fust squad of white folks whose eatin' I ebber 'tem'ted to boss, and dey has pestered me mightily. I was done used-up wid mindin' dat dey should n't dash out de grub, and no mistake.

"De lazy, triflin' kreters was aimin' to git away widout

payin' ole Clara dere washin' money, and ax'd me to wait til Monday, dey hab no small change; but dey did n't fool me, I got de las' cent dat was comin' to me, I had nuff change fur dere big bills, an' got my money fore de sun sot. Dere runnin' away was your pay, Mr. Hardin', for your goodness to 'em; wheat bread ebery day in de week, and dried-apple puddin' for Sunday, was more'n dey 'sarved. I hope dere ain't many white folks up Norf 's low-down as dat crowd; dey was wuss dan a low-down triflin' nigger."

Upon examining their barracks, we found the runaways had taken with them the blankets, which belonged to us, so that we were out of pocket not less than fifty dollars on this score. Billy spent the day getting their scattered tools together (each hand was charged with his tools), finding them all, save two axes and a hoe, in good condition. The fact is, they had n't worked hard enough to hurt them much.

Our blacks were relieved at the disappearance of the whites. Trifling as most of them were, they seemed to regard themselves as above the motley white crowd, and "de wheat bread of de white folks, long side of dere hoe cake," and many other little favors which the whites had, and which they had not, was no longer there to "pester" them.

Never was there a better evidence, in a small way, of the truth of the "irrepressible conflict" than in this little experience of ours. Never was there a more forcible illustration of the utter fallacy or impossibility of successfully attempting to feed and lodge two men, who are grinding the same grist, in different stalls, and on different diet, simply because one is black and the other white. What is flesh for one must be flesh for the other, and where there is equality in labor, perfect equality must run through the whole government.

Even with the best material on either side to deal with (and, indeed, the better the class of labor the more difficult it

would have been to make the distinction), our attempt to put white and black laborers alongside of each other in the field, and then to separate them in bed, board, and at the pay-table, would have proved a failure. It was, perhaps, just as well that we had furnished ourselves such poor material with which to test this experiment—for we had now tested it to our hearts' content, as well as to our great annoyance, and at much expense; it would have been a pity to have spoiled a better class of labor in the operation.

This was about the time those negro regiments were to be mustered out at Vicksburg. Our diminished and now diminutive force warned us that we must leave no stone unturned to secure labor. I felt absolutely certain Johnson would succeed, but I might get a few hands by taking a run down to Vicksburg, sooner than he could bring them. Now, that Billy had only the blacks to deal with, I could be spared; besides, Dobson was here, and would assist in looking after things in my absence.

I knew, now, just the kind of hands we wanted, and if I went down myself, I might get some very choice ones. There was no possible danger of our being overstocked with labor, as the planters of the country were paying the labor-brokers in Memphis, Vicksburg, and New Orleans as much as twenty-five dollars apiece for hands delivered on the steamboat. If we should, through Johnson's and my own efforts chance to get a surplus stock, our neighbors, we knew, would be rejoiced to take them, paying us the expense incurred in getting them; so I resolved to make a trip to Vicksburg.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

STEAMBOAT AND VICKSBURG EXPERIENCES—LETTER WRITTEN TO A NORTHERN FRIEND.

"THE steamboat on which I took passage was full of people, who, with scarcely an exception, were planters like myself in search of labor. Some of my fellow-passengers were going as far as Virginia and the Carolinas; in fact, the whole upland country of the South is being scoured to get labor to fill up the Mississippi delta. Those on our steamer came from different points on the river, and I soon found from their conversation that we had plenty of company in our great need of more help. On board the steamer, and at Vicksburg, this is the cry, and great wrath is expressed at the disposition on the part of the 'lazy niggers,' as they are called, to crowd into the cities, and refuse to go to work upon the plantations. There is much loud talk that the Yankee government, which freed them, should force them to go to the country; and every one is urging the necessity of getting up neighborhood combinations to control the price of labor, which shall also define the causes for which labor shall be dismissed (and when so dismissed no one is to be allowed to employ it). Dismissal is to be a sort of Cain's mark, and the theory is that, rather than be thus disgraced, the freedmen will be willing to submit to any terms the planter may be disposed to inflict. The Louisiana Legislature has already virtually adopted the pass-system, which existed in slavery times, by the enactment of a law which will have the effect to prevent negroes from running from one plantation to another, and it is hoped by the planters that every Southern State will make haste to do likewise.

"I do n't hear of a single utterance that does not look to a modified form of slavery. This intention is freely stated. The idea is, to pin each negro down to some particular locality, and to keep him there. All agree that the attitude of the President is such as to warrant them in the belief that the loss of their slaves is but temporary. Every body seems to believe that he is leading a great ground-swell in the North in their favor; that through him they are shortly to gain all they have lost by the conflict of arms.

"The people say it will be difficult to get the negroes out of the cities, and they will have to make large promises to do it; but, once they get them, they will hold them by means of their rigid neighborhood rules, and legislative enactments. Some say the negro owes them a living, and they are bound, with or without the President's help, he shall discharge the debt! With these, the idea of paying for labor is absurd.

"An old man said he never had paid 'nigger' wages, and he was too old to commence it now, especially in view of the position of the President. No one seems to understand how to treat free labor, nor do these people seem to care to learn. They say the negro is free, by the letter of the law, but in spirit, and in their hearts, and in fact, he is as much the slave as ever.

"They say they are soliciting his labor, it is true, but it is simply because a hated power, which they can not resist, has made this step necessary for the time being. If promises will induce any of the 'lazy vagabonds' to come away with them, why there will be no lack of these, but once at home they declare they will show them a thing or two!

"I do not assert this to be the feeling of all the passengers on the boat; what I say is, that it is the public expression, and if there is a difference of opinion it is not asserted.

"Undoubtedly, judging from what I have heard on this

trip, not only on the steamboat, but in the mouths of thousands of planters, who are here after labor, the Southern idea is, that the abolition of slavery is but temporary ; that even now it is only a technical abolition, and through the agency of the President, somehow or in some way, slavery will be restored. Until then, they say they will have to use the so-called free negro, and, in order to get him to go home with them, and go to work, they must make wild promises as to what they will do. 'Any thing to get him, so as to keep the mill running until the slave millennium comes again,' said a small, black-eyed, sallow-complexioned, broad-hatted, small-booted Mississippi planter, with a huge mustache, no vest, and spurs, to a crowd of a hundred other planters, in the front of one of the Vicksburg hotels —to which they all seemed to respond affirmatively.

" It would be a bold man now who would hint at the idea of renting land to negroes, or of their owning the mules, or the farm implements, or of their being educated. Such a person would only subject himself to personal violence. The central, controlling idea is, to get the negro upon the plantation ; once there, to place him as nearly in a condition of slavery as is possible without incurring the interference of what is hated here above all things, namely, the Freedman's Bureau, or Federal troops.

" There is not a sentiment expressed, which looks to a frank acceptance of the labor situation, which the war has forced upon this country ; not a syllable which shows a disposition to take the freedman, and mold and fashion him into a faithful and efficient free laborer.

" The President's position, as it is understood here, is the severest blow which could have been administered to the South—severest, because it is encouraging them to inaugurate a resistance to the Federal government, which they would otherwise never have dreamed of, and which, it requires no prophecy to say, future events will not justify.

" If at this time no encouragement were held out to the

Southern people beyond that which lies in a faithful discharge of their duty as good citizens, the labor problem would, in my judgment, have an easy solution. The Southern people are unused to free labor, and they will at best manage it bungingly; but when, added to their ignorance, is an utter absence of good intent, a generally expressed determination to institute a modified form of slavery, which shall, as it were, bridge over the chasm between the old slavery and that new form which is to be inaugurated by the policy of the President, the case is a bad one indeed. The result of all this must be that which invariably follows from the combination of ignorance of head and badness of heart.

"Naturally, the negro will be distrustful of his former master, just as that master, who has never seen the negro work otherwise than under the lash, will be distrustful of his value as a free laborer. It is thus an experiment on both sides—on the side of the negro as to whether his new master, who now simply owns his labor, will deal fairly by him, paying him to the last penny, according to contract, sheltering him from the weather, furnishing him medicine when he is sick: in short, carrying out his lightest promise; on the side of the planter, as to whether the negro will, for all this, render faithful service. An experiment which can not be successful, without mutual fidelity and perfect good faith. Judging from the element with which I am mingling, there seems to be an alarming absence of these vital prerequisites. If the negroes, on their part, are meditating one-half the badness of those who are seeking their services, it is not difficult to foretell the disastrous results that must follow.

"Of course, there is lamentable ignorance on both sides. The boor of to-day can not become the dancing-master of to-morrow. But if good intent were here, every thing else would follow. Master and slave would be lost sight of in the new and ennobling relation of employer and employed.

The cloud of slavery would, in truth and in fact, be dispelled by the bright sunshine of freedom, and peace and prosperity would reign. But there is the complete absence of good intent in the utterances of those with whom I am surrounded. There is certainly mischief ahead.

"As yet, I have seen little or nothing of the recently enfranchised negro, as those in our employ, with the exception of a woman by the name of Clara, and one or two others, have always been free, so I can make no analysis of his feelings. But it is terrible to contemplate, that, perhaps, while his late master is thus publicly expressing the sentiments which meet my ear on every side, and of which I have given you but the faintest outline, he, too, may be plotting. But even if he is not, if there is no badness in his heart now, bad faith, on the part of the employer, will, in time, beget bad faith on the part of the employed.

"You know the best-constructed machinery often works clumsily at the start. So, in the new compact between the late master and the late slave, for the cultivation of these Southern lands, there will be short-comings. Naturally, these short-comings will be on the side of the late slave, as a result of his ignorance. It will be for the late master, he being the intelligent member of the partnership, to note these short-comings, and he should direct the best effort of head and heart to their correction, seeing to it that no failure occurs on his side to injure the gossamer thread of confidence which, at the first, binds his late chattel to him—by patience and fair dealing, adding other strands, until, in time, it grows to the strength of a cable-chain.

"Once having gained the confidence of the freedmen, the labor problem is virtually settled. As slaves, they proved themselves successful cotton-raisers; as freedmen, they still possess this knowledge. There is the same skill in handling the plow and hoe, in the dropping of the seed, in the cultivation of the plant, as before.

"The only real difference is, that now the planter will have to employ the skill which he formerly owned. The obstacle in the way of this employment is, the natural feeling of distrust, on the part of the freedman, as to whether the planter will deal honestly with him, a feeling which will be overcome only by actual experience.

"In the nature of things, so long as this distrust lurks in the bosom of the freedman, he will not be the willing, efficient worker which he would be with this feeling removed. Thus, the planter has, as it were, his reputation to make—until which time he will be under a cloud, and working to disadvantage.

"This only applies to the former slave-owner. Those of us here from the North will have the confidence of the freedmen from the start. But, as an offset to this, we will not have the old planters' knowledge of cotton-raising, nor his knowledge of negro character, so essential to its successful handling.

"But I am very sorry to have to write you, knowing the deep interest you take in passing events here, that there is nothing in the scenes about me to give any hope that the planters are studying out labor problems, other than those which will place their late chattel in something like the old bondage.

"'Our slaves have been wrested from us!' they loudly cry. 'We have been robbed of our property by the Yankee government; the heel of the tyrant is upon our necks. We have been foully wronged!' and so on for quantity. All day long, during my stay in Vicksburg, and on my return journey, I heard nothing but such expressions. During my entire absence I did not hear an utterance that indicated an acceptance of the labor situation. Nothing that looked the least like an effort to take it and make the best of it.

"This attitude toward their late slaves astonishes me, as it will you, no doubt. They seem to hate them with a de-

gree second only to that of their hatred of the government. Perhaps it is because the government has taken the negroes under its protection in the Freedman's Bureau, and, therefore, in striking these a blow, they will be striking that government which is so odious to them in every way. They seem to regard the negroes as personally responsible for their freedom, and become enraged when they see one of them act as if he felt himself to be free. Occasionally small squads of negro soldiers lounged past the hotel, with their military hats perched on their noses, in the most devil-may-care manner. This always exasperated the planters; but one day a couple came by in civilian's dress, with their hats perched on one side, when hands went in search of pistols, faces became wrathful, and teeth were ground. I almost looked for these two innocent causes of their anger to be shot down. I am certain they made a narrow escape of it. Again, they are filled with an ecstacy of delight if a former slave addresses one of them as 'marsa.'

"The attitude of the President, as they understand it, and as I have before written, gives them hope that this freedom is but temporary, and that they will soon have their slaves in their grasp again. So there is no disposition to deal with them as free laborers.

"In their eyes, the negroes are lazy, trifling, thieving, and unfit to live a day without a master. But still they must have them to cultivate their lands; and how to get them, and how to hold them—not as free laborers, but in a modified form of slavery—is their constant study.

"One would suppose that their self-interest might tell them that in order to retain this black labor, and make it efficient, there must be fair dealing, and perhaps but for the hopes excited in their bosoms by President Johnson, they would so feel and act. But expecting great things from him as they are, confident of them, they seem to feel they can afford to drop a politic course, one that would ultimately lead them to prosperity, for one in strict accord

with their bitter feelings—but one which, alas, will administer a severe blow to this country. Expecting, as they all confidently do at this time, that they will soon recover all they have lost by the war, no one seems to care to hide his feelings. Their hearts are, as it were, pinned to their sleeves, and many of them spout around the hotel until they froth at the mouth like mad."

CHAPTER XXIX.

EXTRACT FROM A SECOND LETTER ON THE SITUATION.

"I PRESUME the expressions of the people on the steamboat and in Vicksburg are similar to those heard everywhere in the South. In all this there is no acceptance of the situation. In these utterances there is no voice which says 'that which the war has decided is final, viz.: that our slaves are forever free; free, it is true, in spite of our efforts to the contrary; still none the less free. But we have the same need for them to cultivate our lands which we had for them as slaves; and, now that they are free, we will employ them and pay them just the wages we agree to pay them. We will adopt as our motto—a fair day's wages and a fair day's work. And, because free labor is more desirable when the laborer can read and write, we will encourage education. We will also endeavor to instill principles of thrift and all virtues, setting our faces sternly against idleness, thieving, and the other vices.' If the Southern people would only say this, and not only say it, but act it, at this early day, when this new form of labor lies in their hands a plastic mass, how much of suffering for the future it would avert. What a mountain of distrust between employer and employed would be re-

moved, a mountain, soft and yielding, which would melt away under the benign influences of fair dealing and kind treatment, but which, in their absence, will become granite.

"It is, at the outstart of this negro labor, once slave, now free, where cool heads and calm, sober judgment are required. All passion and prejudice should be buried before approaching it. Ultimately, of course, it can not fail of success, but much depends as to whether it shall be useful in the near or in the remote future upon this, its first full year's operation.

"Evidently, from the expressions all about me, as indicated in my former letter, it is not to be managed by cool heads. There is to be no sober judgment about it. Passion and prejudice are every-where apparent. Babes or madmen would be equally fit to approach the solution of this problem—a solution which is either to make this country bud and blossom now, or to further impoverish it—as those who are now storming through the cabin of this steamboat, and are, it is to be presumed, since the same influences are at work every-where in this country, an index of the South. It is sad to think that it is in the hands of this class. It seems to me that one might as well expect to find one's pocket-book after it has been lying under the eyes of a gang of thieves, as to expect any good results for labor so long as it is to be handled by this untaught, and apparently unteachable, element. No, my dear friend, the solution of the labor question of the South is in bad hands, and I predict that it will take years of patient effort to bring it out of the snarl into which this season will put it. There will be much of suffering on both sides in the meantime.

"Oh, how much dross there is in the composition of the late master, and perhaps as much, though of a different character, in that of the late slave, which will have to be melted out in the crucible of time. On the part of the late master, it will only be those who finally accept the situa-

tion, acknowledging frankly that the negro is a free man, and treat him accordingly, who will achieve success. This acknowledgment will be the forerunner, as it were, of that success, and how far those with whom I am mingling seem from any such acknowledgment at this time!

"Fortunately for the country, the fire now raging in the Southern heart is not an unquenchable one. Sooner or later it will exhaust itself. But, in the meantime, what a destructive fire it is likely to be! There will be no one in this country who will not be scorched by it. It will, moreover, stay the tide of immigration and capital now flowing Southward, until these life-giving influences will turn away from it with loathing and disgust. Of those already here from the North, possessing capital, full of energy, and having an honest ambition to assist in building up the country—with a laudable intent to enrich ourselves, but in so doing to enrich the waste places—how many will be driven away with broken or ruined fortunes, to tell the tale in the North of how we were insulted, fleeced, and abused until we could endure it no longer; how few will have the courage to remain until this raging, consuming fire shall have spent itself.

"Of course, if the hatred which is every-where apparent towards the negro and the Federal government should extend to us, it will know no bounds, and scores will be driven away within the year, returning to the North, whence they came, where, in their turn blinded by passion and prejudice, they will naturally picture the state of affairs worse than it is. If the attack on us comes at all, it will be with a vengeance. The Southern people never do things half way. But all this is anticipating, and I only started out to tell you of the present. 'Sufficient unto the day,' etc.

"It is the insane hope inspired by President Johnson which now furnishes fuel to that fire which sank down at Appomattox into a smoldering heap. He it is who is fan-

ning those dying embers and causing the fire to blaze again all over the South, reddening the sky with its unhealthy glow—a fire which is to be quite as delusive as the first, and this time disastrous to the future of the Southern country as that first fire which blazed out of the Sumter gun was disastrous to the Southern people, in taking from them their slaves. But perhaps this second fire is only the natural sequence of the first.

"Our constitution says 'all men are free and equal,' but that was an untruth. That first fire made it a truth, but only a truth in letter and in theory, judging from the utterances of the people here. Let us hope that this second fire will establish it as a glowing and glorious fact. But before it is so established there will, I fear, be a going down into the valley of the shadow of death on the part of many of us here, and a long sojourn there.

"When the first fire burned down at the general surrender of the Confederate armies, all eyes, you know, were turned to this Southern country. Notably, officers and soldiers of our armies are making haste to find a home here. The war opened this country to their inspection, and during their campaigns some attractive spot was marked which, should their lives be spared, would claim them when the war was over. It is well known that these are brave men and true, and generally the cream of the locality which they are leaving, and from which, since the departure of a good citizen is always a loss, they can not be easily spared.

"They had, as Dobson said, assisted in conquering the rebellion, and they are coming now as soldiers of peace to assist in building the country anew. I do not believe there is one of them coming here from motives of political ambition. The fact is, there is no political field open to Northern men here. The Southern people are in the quiet possession of their government, and for aught any one can now tell, are likely to remain so.

"This immigration comprises men coming South simply as farmers, on the strength of such statements as that with which Dobson captivated me (and which, you remember, almost persuaded you to break up and come also), and under the impression that they will be fairly treated in the localities where they shall settle. No better class of immigrants ever blessed a country than this; they are courageous, intelligent, full of activity, and utterly devoid of any bitterness in their hearts towards the South, or they would not think of locating here. They form also a most desirable class of immigrants, because they come with capital.

"Look at the list of names which at this moment occur to me among those already here: Generals Frank Blair, A. L. Lee, Francis J. Heron, Willard Warner, W. B. Woods, W. L. McMillen, J. H. Sypher; Colonels Bissel, John Lynch, P. Jones Yorke; Major Edmonds; Drs. Franklin, Barr, and Phelps; Captains Hiram R. Steele, Whitney, Mathews, Gould, C. D. Benton, Ed. C. Manning, J. C. Chittenden, L. B. Rhodes, James Andrews; with Whitelaw Reid, George C. Benham, J. O. Pierce, Samuel Galloway, John S. and A. B. Harris, Thomas Gaff, Charles Howe. Most of these you know either in person or by reputation, and doubtless this little group is only a fair sample of the many scattered all over the South.

"This immigration is, so to speak, a venture sent out from the North; the advance-guard of a host which is to follow if these fare well. Its individual ventures are like so many ships dispatched by the venturesome merchant to some foreign shore, hitherto unknown to commerce, where promises of profit are good—to be followed by large fleets if these promises should be realized, or abandoned if they should not be.

"It is the harm which the second fire I have mentioned will do to these first ventures, resulting, as it naturally will, in stopping the further flow of immigration and cap-

ital, which will be most disastrous to the future of the country. The first fire, while it seemed to have impoverished the people by taking away their slaves, ought to benefit the country by opening it up to settlement, and so it will, but for this second fire, invoked by the South, which, while it may eventually purify the people, fitting them to receive and enjoy the blessings of a free labor system at some future day, by burning away all the prejudices which have been engendered by a century of slavery, and perhaps establishing for a distant time the foundation for a broad and substantial prosperity for this country, so rich in soil and climate: establishing it, not from any wise management or good sense on the part of the people, but from the very fact that the fires of passion, hatred, and that spirit of rebellion against what is inevitable will have burnt out, leaving reason and common sense to assume their sway;—while it will, perhaps, do all this, the immediate effect will be to prevent even the impulse to immigration hither. Thus will be turned back a life-giving stream, which is now flowing naturally into the country, whose return must be invoked at some future day, when the madness and insanity of the people shall have passed away forever.

"It is perhaps too soon to form a correct opinion as to how this stream of immigration and capital now flowing into the country from the North is regarded by the Southern people. I do not, indeed, believe they have entirely made up their minds about it yet, from what I see and hear. We seem to be rather objects of curiosity, and we are also distrusted. Our actions to them are strange and peculiar.

"I mention the following stories told of us, which will give you a better idea of how we are regarded than any description I can write you:

"A Yankee new-comer, who had landed his outfit on a wharf-boat, took off his coat and actually turned in with

the 'niggers' and 'holped' load his freight into his, wagons, rolling his boxes and barrels up the bank just as they did. Then he straddled the lead-mule in one of the teams, and drove off to his plantation, just like a 'nigger.'

"Another had been seen plowing at the head of his plow-gang!

"Another had been seen to drink water out of the same gourd the 'niggers' used!

"It was mentioned that they all brought cookin' stoves, wood-saws, and India-rubber over-shoes with them!

"A blear-eyed, vicious-looking planter told how one of the Yankees had started a Sunday-school among the 'niggers' on his plantation, which he seemed to consider an insult to the South. Several had started day-schools, and it is not an uncommon thing to see the Yankee planters actually teaching the 'niggers' at night themselves. This thing of 'book-larnin' 'mong niggers' is generally hooted at. Several of the planters reckoned it would be a good thing to get one of these Yankees for a 'pardner,' the 'niggers are so fond of 'em.' 'We have the land,' they say, 'and know how to make cotton; the Yankees can furnish the niggers and the money.' Almost every one knew of cases in his neighborhood where these 'pardnerships' had been started, and it ''peared to be workin' well.' It seemed to be regarded as a great triumph to get a good trade out of the 'Yankees.' The case was mentioned where one of them had contracted to pay twenty-five dollars an acre rent for a single year. And then some one told how Hampson had sold a plantation to a General Dobson for seventy-five dollars an acre—(I should have said before this that I did n't know a soul on the boat, and if any one noticed me at all, it was most probably to take me for a Southerner, for my exposure had bronzed my features, so their conversations were conducted without restraint): these were regarded as splendid operations, and all were agreed that the

Yankees had been 'salivated' in these instances 'for a fact,' and there was unmistakably much glee at the thought. Ten to fifteen dollars an acre was said to be the usual price the 'Yankees' were paying as rent for their land, and they were generally renting. There was only here and there an instance where they had purchased. The general idea is that the 'Yankees' are strongly inclined to do a great deal of work themselves, and there is much turning up of the nose at this. It might do in their country, they said, but it will never do down here among the 'niggers.' It will be setting them a bad example. Evidently they regard labor as degrading.

"Nearly every 'Yankee' has some new labor-saving machinery, they say—now it is a prairie or sub-soil plow, now it is a cotton-planter—something that will open the place for the seed, as well as drop it and cover it: all done by one man and one mule, thus accomplishing the work formerly done by two mules and three men; now it is a cotton-cultivator, similar to that with which corn is cultivated in the West; and now it is a steel-plow instead of one of wrought-iron. They generally bring sewing-machines and hay-cutters, which last is considered a good joke in view of the fact that roughness for teams is usually corn-fodder. Great is the sport made over these innovations on the old-time ways and the old-time instruments used in cotton-raising.

"May be these 'Yankees' can find something better than the Calhoun plow, they say, or the old way of planting and cultivating cotton, but they reckon not; they reckon they will get tired enough of these new-fangled instruments. They reckon they knew pretty well how to raise cotton 'fore the wa';' may be not, but from the crops they raised they think they did, and they reckon the Yankees will think so themselves 'fore the season is over.

"There is evidently a disposition to chuckle when they

think they see the 'Yankees' making mistakes, and it seems to be quite the thing to squeeze as much money out of them as possible, without any thought as to whether they are giving value in return. There is nothing said about giving encouragement to the new-comer. There is no discussion over immigration schemes. There does not seem to be the least idea that this is a tide which they should encourage, or that good results will come of it—if there is any question about it, it is the question of letting the 'Yankees' come! They are flocking down here, and either buying or leasing Southern lands. It might or it might not be a good thing to let them. Of course, when they could be 'made' to think as they did, it was all right. But they found most of them would have ideas of their own, which they might express, or, worse, they might seek to enforce them upon communities where they were located. Some might refuse to go into their projected combinations to control the 'niggers.' These refractory ones must be 'forced' into line. If this 'Yankee' immigration meant diversity of opinion, then it was a 'pest,' and must be gotten rid of. One sentiment, one thought, one idea only could be tolerated. This had been the way 'fore the wa',' and this must be the way now. It was only the few leading men in each community that knew what was best to do. This had been the rule in slavery times, and this must still be the rule.

"It seems to be generally understood that the 'Yankees' who are coming here would have to hate the government, the 'nigger,' and the 'radical' party, as much as they did, in order to get along peaceably. That was always the case, they said, when Yankees came down here 'fore the wa',' and several instances were given where the new-comers were doing so now, having declared that 'we uns' had done perfectly right in fighting, and that the Yankee government had done very wrong in 'stopping us, and destroying our property;' and these were pronounced splendid

fellows. If all the 'Yankee' immigrants were like these, there would be no trouble.

"To sum it all up, we are objects of curiosity—our coming is a novelty. We will be first rate to 'tote' labor to them, and furnish money. We all have plethoric pocket-books, and whether we get value received for our money or not is a matter of very little consequence to them, so they get it. We are inclined to bowl ahead at a pretty lively pace, and to do a gooddeal of work ourselves. This will demoralize the 'niggers,' and is bad. But they can probably 'tolerate' this, if we will only have no opinions of our own, generally speaking, and, above all, we must hate the free 'nigger' and the 'Yankee' government. Such is the substance of the coarse criticisms I hear on all sides.

"This hatred of the government is something awful, and the constant din against it is exceedingly annoying. I should as soon spend my time in a boiler-foundry, or stand alongside during minute-shooting, with a hundred-pound Parrott-gun, as far as comfort is concerned. It seems to be a subject of which these people never tire. From morning till night, and late into the night, whisky-drinking, card-playing, and cursing the government are kept up. As often as a joke is cracked, or what they consider to be a good thing said, just so often every one is invited to take a drink; and frequently, when coarse jokes and dull points are scarce, this invitation goes around between times. Always before breakfast and dinner comes the appetizer, in the shape of a cock-tail, and on a moderate-sized steamboat like ours, with perhaps two hundred passengers, enough 'night-caps' are taken to supply each room of the largest hotel in the country. I do n't know just what they get when they call for a 'night-cap,' but from its appearance suppose it to be the same as the before-breakfast and before-dinner drink.

"Wherever I went on the boat, and in Vicksburg, there were still the same loose, loud-mouthed tirades against what

they term 'radi*cal*' rule in the country. If a Rip Van Winkle should suddenly appear on the scene, after his years of sleep, he would suppose, from the constant utterances, that he was among a people who had always regarded the constitution of their country with veneration. 'The constitution is being violated!' 'The constitution is being trampled in the dust!' 'Such conduct is unconstitutional!' 'The radical tyrants of the North are disregarding the sacred principles of the constitution!' and so on for quantity.

"How singular this all seems. You know, in your section of the country the few are politicians; but here, the thing is reversed. Here is a country of farmers, and yet, every one of them is a politician! They tell you just when, and where, and how the government has violated its every pledge. Not being a Rip Van Winkle, this sort of talk impresses me as a little singular, coming, as it does, from a people just emerged from a bloody war, which they inaugurated, the direct object of which was to overthrow that constitution, and destroy that government. Don't you agree with me, that it is in bad taste for those people to vilify the government which has only so recently extended to them the hand of pardon? Instances are mentioned where their leaders fled the country after the surrender, but learning that the government was not arresting any body, they had returned, and their property had been restored to them, and yet, there is nothing said of magnanimity on the part of the Nation. On the contrary, this sort of thing is falling upon most unthankful soil. I verily believe this magnanimity is being mistaken for cowardice; in fact, they say 'we want our leaders among us, just as we always had them, and the Yankee government had better not put any thing in the way!'

"Is n't it just possible that a little iron rule would be a good thing down here now? just enough to compel strict obedience to the acts of Congress, which to-day, it seems

to me, is endeavoring to temper justice with mercy; but its measures are being thwarted by the unfortunate and unexpected attitude of the chief executive.

"A stranger here would suppose that there was n't the least vestige of wrong clinging to the garments of these people, that all of wrong was on the side of the Nation, 'which is now oppressing them,' as they say. They declare, in specific language, that they 'are a greatly wronged and much abused people.' Well, it is, perhaps, charity to say that they have shouted this story so loud and so continuously, that they have actually come to believe it themselves!

"They are certainly very much in earnest in their denunciations of the 'Yankee' government. What a change this is from the Appomattox feeling! Said an acquaintance I met in Vicksburg: 'When I traveled from the Ohio to the Rio Grande last year, I thought this people the most humble people upon the face of the earth; but judging from their behavior now, that humbleness must have been a good deal after the style of Uriah Heap. Then they confessed themselves willing to do any thing and every thing to appease the government, but now I find the great majority but little less impudent than they were in the winters of 1860 and 1861. Upon every street-corner, upon steamboats, upon railroads, and in stage coaches, you hear the expressions d—n Yankees, d—n the government, and others similar. Coming from New Orleans to this point in the cabin, some one remarked that the captain of our steamer had been in the Federal army. A man that I had before taken to be a perfect gentleman, flushing up and looking as near like the devil as I think it possible for a human being to do, said: 'If I had known that, I would have seen the d—n villian in h—l before I had taken passage on his steamer!' 'So would I!' 'So would I!' came from all sides; and, notwithstanding the vulgarity of his language, this stranger immediately became a general

favorite among the ladies. 'Hatred to the government, its supporters, and its flag is taught in its churches, Sunday-schools, and colleges,' said he; 'mothers instil it into their children so soon as they can tell what a blue coat and brass buttons mean!' And indeed it seems so.

"Great enthusiasm was created on our steamboat over an editorial from one of the Southern papers, which I managed to copy as follows:

"'All the Southern papers are jubilant over the defeat of the Freedman's Bureau bill. Since the morning of July 22, '61—when news of the great Southern victory, achieved by Beauregard over McDowell, and the awful rout of the Federal army on the plains of Manassas, was borne through the South on the wings of the wind, as it were, carrying joy and jubilation into every loyal Southern household, gladdening every true Southern heart—there has been no news received with so much rejoicing by the people of the South, as that informing them that the President had vetoed the Freedman's Bureau bill. This is the greatest victory they have achieved during the war, greater than any feats of arms of Stonewall Jackson or Robert E. Lee, and has given them more pleasure than had General Lee been elected governor of Virginia. They have found an ally in President Johnson worth more to them than the alliance of France or England, and they now rejoice to see, even as they saw foreshadowed at Manassas, the final triumph of the Southern cause. The Republicans have been ignominiously defeated and driven from the field, and nothing can save them from total annihilation. All that is necessary for the South to do, is to continue to hold up the President's hands. The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner, and Andrew Johnson is enshrined in every loyal Southern heart. They will accept no terms from the radicals. They ask for none and expect none. The fanatics may roar and hiss, but their claws are cut, and their fangs are harmless. The watchword must

henceforth be, "Johnson and victory!" and, although the odds are four to one against them, did they not carry on a four-years' open war in the field successfully, against still greater odds? A fig for your Republican Congress! We have a President with absolute powers, who can carry on a government good enough for this section without the assistance of Congress.'"

"It does not matter that the Congress which the Southern people did n't care 'a fig' for had already passed the Freedman's Bureau bill over the President's veto (though that side of the picture will not likely be written up; it is only what the people should hear, according to the opinions of the leaders, which they are allowed to hear), it is still a glorious event, and this editorial had to be read over, slobbered over, and drank over scores of times, to squads of delighted and enthusiastic listeners.

"It does not matter that such draughts as the above are deadly poison to all the best interests of this country. It is pleasant to the taste, and they quaff the cup to its dregs. This is the food the Southern people are being fed on at this time. These frothy utterances are victuals, drink, clothing, warmth, and sunlight to them. Is it any wonder they are growing belligerent in their feelings? Is it any wonder they are growing troublesome?—that disorder and outrages are increasing? I am not at all surprised at the wide-spread alarm existing among the negroes in Vicksburg. Indeed, it is rather a matter of surprise that any of them can be induced to go to the country with strangers, in view of the dark and uncertain future before them.

"The enemies of the country have circulated the report that government protection in the South is to be withdrawn, by order of the President, and there are many negroes, I understand, strongly inclined to leave the Southern States entirely. I do not doubt that many of them, and that the most intelligent of them, will actually carry

this threat into execution. Perhaps it would be better for most of them to do it."

CHAPTER XXX.

FURTHER ON THE SITUATION.

In reply to a letter written to me by a friend in the North, referring to the effect of a speech made by President Andrew Johnson, at the White-House, in Washington, February 22, 1867—a speech which gave great assurance to the still rebellious element of the South, and which my correspondent characterized as an ugly stone cast into the National pond, creating a great splash—I wrote as follows:

"It is this and other stones, which the same hand is casting into the National pool, which is giving new courage to the disloyal element of this section, which will render it necessary to fight the war over again, as it were, through the building-up process which lies before us; or, perhaps, I might more properly say, the tearing-down process. The building-up process may be in the distant future; I should say it is, from the outlook just now. We must have a foundation before we can rear the superstructure, and I think that is yet to be laid.

"There is one reason which prevents the hearts of the Southern people from being completely fired over the encouragement they are receiving from Washington, and, as they firmly believe, from the reaction in the North in their favor. That reason is, that they have already taken unto themselves an idol. That idol is money. Yes, the greed of mammon is now serving as a break-water to their rekin-

dled passion against the government. In the light of their love of money, hatred to the government, beyond such loud-mouthed utterances as you hear on Southern steamboats, in Southern cities, and, no doubt, generally through the South, and which are, of course, very annoying to listen to, is of small consequence.

"This first idol must be appeased, before the second shall assume mastery; and this first idol is to be satisfied they think, through the production of cotton. A bountiful harvest of money is to spring from this fleecy staple. The same mania which is driving thousands of people and millions of money here from the North, is absorbing the Southern people also. In the light of this mania, their angry feeling against the government may be said to be more a pastime than a steady purpose. It is also mellowing the sentiment toward us new-comers. You know the pursuit of money is always softening—it is its possession which hardens one—because we are striving for a common goal, one which is to be reached, if at all, by a journey along a common road. There is a kindred interest, and, therefore, a kindred feeling naturally springs up. This is serving its purpose in breaking the force of the waves of prejudice and passion against the negro and the new-comer, keeping what would otherwise be uncontrollable within such bounds as save us from present personal violence, because, however much they may rail against the negro, however much they may spout their unholy purposes, they know that he, by his labor, is to be the instrument in their hands to gratify their avarice, if it is to be gratified.

"Land, Labor, and Lucre is what they want, and all they want, say they, to realize their dream of wealth. Land they have; and while few will be able to get a full supply of labor, there will be none who will not be successful, either to a greater or less degree, in securing it. As for lucre, most of the people have a little of that hoarded in one way and another, but principally saved from the wreck

of cotton-burning insanity, which you know raged in the South during the war. Those who have not any money of their own, can borrow all they want from New Orleans,—as none were more promptly on the ground, after the surrender, than the New Orleans cotton-factors, largely reinforced with sums of money running up into the millions,—and new firms, from the North, ready to loan to any impecunious cotton-planter who may choose to apply.

"The production of cotton at present prices, is thought to be immensely profitable. We are supposed to be inhabiting a second California, and colossal fortunes are in the near future for all of us. Statements like Dobson's are in the hands of every cotton-votary, and quotations from them fall upon your ear from all quarters. This year is confidently looked forward to as one which will realize a bountiful harvest. The land has rested for the most part during the war, and has enriched itself in consequence. The enormous vegetable growth which annually rotted on the ground, was so much fertilizing material. Thus enriched, the yield can not be otherwise than large.

"The dreaded army-worm made its visit last year, and, judging from the past, is not likely to come again for several years. So there is little or no danger from it.

"Aside from the love of money inherent in the human breast, the Southern people feel desperately poor. They say they want money for the actual necessities of life. They think they have been impoverished by the war, and that they must put forth a great effort to regain what they call their former wealth. Do you know this boasted wealth was the merest sham? That the money they spent was in many cases not theirs, but borrowed? True, it was a something, this unlimited credit of theirs, which gave them all they wanted to spend, and this was wealth in their eyes, even though it was the wealth that came from killing the goose, etc. The fact is, when the war came on, there was scarcely a planter in the country free from debt, and per-

haps a majority may be said to have been hopelessly involved. They had the title to large quantities of land, and on these lands were many slaves, but they were either mortgaged for part payment for cash, or for the purpose of borrowing money to buy more slaves, or to carry on their reckless extravagances in living—their gambling and drinking debts, etc. So much was this the case that New Orleans alone held twenty million dollars' worth of mortgages against the lands and slaves of the planters in the Mississippi valley! What a singular law it was that allowed them to mortgage their slaves, chattels, just as they did their lands! This volume of indebtedness, instead of decreasing from year to year, was annually on the increase, so that it is perhaps true, as has been stated, that the war simply precipitated the crisis which sooner or later would surely have come. The above points I gathered in Vicksburg from a foreign banker, who was the power behind the throne—that is, he was one of those who loaned the New Orleans cotton factors money to loan to the planters, and knew perfectly well that which he affirmed. He was a great sufferer from his financial operations in the South; said he had come over to see for himself just how much he was injured by his money investments here. He told me the cotton factors in New Orleans knew perfectly well that they owned the planters before the war; that they were in the habit of boasting of it at their private club-dinners. Said he, the planters paid in one way and another, twenty-five per cent. for the money they borrowed, and there is no business in the world that will stand such a tariff. Only think of it, he continued, one bale in every four went for interest and commissions, and the Southern people never realized that this sort of improvidence was ruining them. They thought they were rich, because whenever they drew a check on New Orleans it was honored, and never stopped to think whether they had any money to their credit, and if you could get a glimpse

at the books of the cotton factors, and could see their cords of notes, you would understand that only a very small percentage of them ever did have any money to their credit. There are but few men who would not ruin themselves financially in the course of time, if you give them unlimited credit. That is what the people of this valley had, and if there ever was a people traveling rapidly the broad road to financial ruin, it was this people. In the border slave states, the producers were piling up wealth by annually selling off their surplus slaves and mules to the planters in this country, and by this means, and by their wasteful extravagance, the planters here were piling up debts. Thus it was that while there existed a substantial prosperity in the border states, in this country there was only the outward semblance of wealth. True it is, he said, you talk with the planters here in this strain, and they will tell you that the debts of the Southern people were incurred for plantations, slaves, and mules, all of which were legitimate investments, and that there was no one in the country so much involved, but that three crop-years, with prudence, would put him out of debt; but right there, he said, was the rub—the crop-years would come, but the prudence never showed itself, and so it was that the strange and unnatural spectacle presented itself, of a people with unlimited means, and who were yet a parcel of bankrupts. You know, he said, it is frequently the case that a merchant, who may be doing a large and apparently profitable business, is yet on the high road to bankruptcy. His bankers are perfectly aware of it, but they say to themselves: 'This man can swim for one, two, or three years, as the case may be. In the mean time, we can, his necessities requiring it, loan him money at a high rate of interest, and thus he is one of our most profitable customers.' But when the banker sees that his man has gone to the end of his string, he shuts down upon him, collects his notes and the man is snuffed out financially. This was

just the situation of the Southern people, and the foreign capitalists, who were making handsome profits out of their money in New Orleans, knew it was only a question of time when we would have to shut down, and so did the cotton factors there, who were using our money in part, and in part theirs. But the war coming on brought every thing up with a round turn.

"I do not deny, this man said, that there were planters in this country, whose manner of doing business was so loose, and whose modes of life were so extravagant, and who were so profligate in every way, that if the cotton factors in New Orleans could have gotten their names off their books, that is, could have gotten what this class owed them, they would have been denied future credits. But there was the trouble;—these 'sick' accounts were carried from year to year, in the vain hope that bye-and-bye the indebtedness would be lessened. If these names should be stricken from the books, it would involve a total loss, and, perhaps, by letting them have a few more thousands the thousands already out could be collected. And so these profligates went on from year to year, getting deeper and deeper in debt, becoming more hopelessly involved, and the factors paid their checks, which were daily presented, with wry faces. Of course, he said, these fellows could be closed out, that is their lands and negroes sold, but they were frequently the representative men of the community where they lived; they considered themselves honorable, high-toned, and solvent, and would have been highly indignant had summary steps been taken against them. Perhaps personal difficulties would have resulted, customers would have been lost in the neighborhood, so the factors pocketed their feelings, with what they felt would almost certainly be their losses, and said nothing. But if these profligate planters could have read the feelings of the factors frequently when they paid their checks, they would not have been at all complimented by it. Why, sir.

said he, warming with the subject, a single trip of a steamboat down the river, with its load of lower Mississippi planters, frequently precipitated upon the factors of New Orleans checks amounting to fifty thousand dollars for the poker and champagne debts incurred while on board, and a week of races at the Metaire course at New Orleans, has been known to cause a disbursement of one hundred thousand dollars by factors to pay the checks of planters who had staked on the wrong horses—the great bulk of which would be an advance on some future crop. I do n't believe there was another country in the world where money was loaned in enormous sums, to pay poker, whisky, and racing debts, as it was here; and the factors knew perfectly well, in most cases, for what purpose the money was going—indeed, so open and above board was the thing conducted, that I 've heard of cases where checks actually read 'for poker,' 'champagne,' or 'wine,' or 'lost in betting on' such a horse—naming the one. What would a bank president think, said he, up in the country you came from, to have an application made to him for a loan to pay for a game of poker, or a racing debt?—and yet these applications were daily thrown into the faces of the cotton factors down here, through the checks of the planters, and duly honored.

"The young bloods of the South always kept their own exclusive bottles of brandy on ice in the bar-rooms—French brandy, generally, at ten dollars a gallon. The planters always settled their bills monthly. They never paid the money, but gave a draft on their factors. Neither the planters nor their families carried money about them—what they wanted they ordered, and the bills were sent to their factors. There was one family in Louisiana—several brothers, their wives and children—that would sometimes occupy a third of the St. Charles Hotel, New Orleans, and their ordinary hotel bills would be $4,000 to $5,000 a month.

"Some planters, more prudent than the rest, conceived the idea of disposing of a portion of their land to the new-comers, as Hampson did, using enough of the proceeds to free that which they still held from debt, buying their notes at greatly less than par, thus making up in discount what they otherwise may be losing in the price of the land so sold. But, as a general rule, strong in the belief of large immediate crop profits, and a rapid advance in the land, they are inclined to hold on to their acres, expecting to relieve them from their load of indebtedness by means of such crop profits. At this time, there is perhaps no plantation eligibly located in the delta of the Mississippi but would bring fifty dollars an acre. All places offered for sale are eagerly purchased, and many are compelled to rent land who would purchase if they could find plantations for sale. And some are compelled to give up the idea of settling here because they can not find suitable places either for sale or rent. In fact, there is not only a scramble for labor, but there is a scramble for land. When they are not storming at the government, every body is talking of a bale to a bale and a half to the acre, of land free from overflow, and old planters are constantly telling what this place and that place produced every year before the war, in such an off-hand way as to give the impression that nothing is easier. The general idea seems to be that the margin of profit is so great that there is not the least necessity to economize in expenditures; that ten to fifteen thousand dollars more or less on a thousand-acre plantation is a matter of very little consequence.

"This is not talk for the purpose of selling their land, for land either sells or rents itself, but it is what the planters feel and believe. Every one pooh-poohs at the idea of the army-worm coming again for many years. The planting and cultivating of cotton is declared to be a perfect play-spell. It is only the picking-season when there is a press of work,

and nobody in the valley of the Mississippi ever expects to be able to pick out over three-quarters of his crop. Indeed, the whole thing seems to be so easy of accomplishment, and so simple, that there can be no such thing as failure.

"About all that seems necessary to do in the eyes of the new-comers, and for that matter the Southern people too, is to fill our pockets with cotton-seed, then ride across a thousand-acre plantation, when, presto, there will be a bale to a bale and a half of cotton to the acre, in the fall, ripe for the pickers!

"During my first journey South, and during this trip for labor, I have never found a man who has himself ever heard of a man, or who has ever heard of a man who has seen a man, who has not made a full crop of cotton, as much or more than he can gather.

"The fact is, as Hampson told us, the planters either went to Virginia or Kentucky for the summer, and so great were their crops they were in the habit of buying and bringing out a few hands in the fall each year to help pick them out.

"How intoxicating this talk is, to be sure! How safe it makes our enterprise appear, and what a mountain of profits it piles up! Really, Dobson was too moderate in his estimate, judging from the statements all about me—statements made by old planters, who ought to know just what they can do, because they know just what they have done.

"In view of this prospective harvest of greenbacks, I can stand with comparative complacency the constant tirades which I hear against the government, and I actually find myself making mental apologies for them. It is so in all countries, I say to myself, where the opportunities for accumulating wealth rapidly is great. Look at California in the early day. Then the pistol and the bowie-knife were

quite as common as they are here now. Go to any newly-discovered country, and you will find quite as large a percentage of wild, vicious people as you will find on any of the lower Mississippi steamboats, or at any of the lower Mississippi landings.

"No, here is a new California, as it were, opened up, and the people have a perfect right to be a drinking, gambling, loafing, loud-mouthed, half-civilized, unchristian set. That man who, as I write, is sitting with his legs over the back of a chair, squirting tobacco-juice, drinking whisky-toddies every ten minutes, picking his teeth with his huge pocket-knife, and swearing like a Turk—that man has a perfect right to talk about the chivalry of this Eldorado, for is he not one of them? And the fifty others about him, who act and talk as he does, hav n't they a perfect right, too, for are n't they of the elect? And the inevitable crowd of loose-jointed young men, middle-aged men, old men and boys, who swarm in and out at every landing of the boat, have n't they a right to hang over the bar like thirsty camels? Have n't they a right to look vicious, to talk vicious, to act vicious, and to be strapped down with pistols and bowie-knives, to back this look and talk and action, if need be? And those half dozen fellows, steeped in debauch, throwing away some cotton-factor's money at the card-table—is n't that the essence of enjoyment, according to their standard?

"The lecture-room, books, the society of cultivated men and refined women, may be the thing in other portions of this country—but down here, with all this odor and damp of newness? No.

"In the light of twenty-five cents a pound for cotton, and a bale to a bale and a half an acre, these irregularities are softened and toned down, as the prospect of near wealth only will soften and tone down such irregularities.

"These are a people who are charmed by exteriors. They insist on seeing on the walls that which is in their

hearts, without any apparent thought as to whether such display is either policy or good taste. Hence the pictures of their Southern Generals, which greet the eye on every side, in the cabins of these lower Mississippi river steamboats, at the hotels, all business places, all places of resort; and hence the names of Southern States, Southern Generals, and leading Southern men painted on the side wheels of their steamboats, for to this morbid taste steamboat owners, many of whom are Western men, pander. Great enthusiasm is just at this time expressed over the steamer 'Robert E. Lee,' now being built for the trade between Vicksburg and New Orleans, while on the other hand a steamboat named 'Philip Sheridan,' which came steaming down the river from St. Louis, the other day, encountered such a storm of wrath as to compel her owners to put her in extreme Northern waters after her first trip.

"These people never seem to think that such pictures and names may be unpleasant to new-comers, or to tourists. Oh, no, they have no philosophy which tells of pleasure in sacrifice. These pictures and names please and delight them, they say. If new-comers and tourists do n't enjoy them, let them keep away. If this sort of thing keeps immigration away, let it stay. They declare they will feast their eyes on these pictures even if death to the Southern country lurks behind the canvas. They will do this, while they will not for a moment tolerate pictures of Federal Generals in steamboat cabins, or names of Federal Generals on the side-wheels of steamboats, or hardly from the lips of individuals, other than in terms of derision. Indeed, that would be a bold captain who should now come down the river with such pictures in his cabin.

"Not only on steamboats and in hotels is this unwholesome taste gratified, but placarded on bulletin-boards, in fence-corners, along curb-stones, in stores, in groceries and in bar-rooms, are the faces of Southern Generals made to illustrate every thing, from a bottle of bitters to a

bar of common washing soap, and a close examination shows that these articles are mostly manufactured in the North!

"There is 'Our Own Southern Bitters,' with a picture of Stonewall Jackson on the front, profusely advertised in Vicksburg, and for sale in the bar of the boat I came down on. Who do you think makes it? It is made in Memphis by a former townsman of mine, who came South shortly after our troops occupied that place. I met him at Memphis as we came down, and he told me, with a wink, what he was up to. 'My picture suits the Southern people,' he said; 'any thing to make money, you know.' So that articles not manufactured in the North are doubtless in almost every case manufactured by Northern men bent upon supplying fuel to this Southern depravity, because in so doing they make money.

"There is 'Robert E. Lee' every thing. In fact, a person can go to house-keeping very cleverly with only 'Robert E. Lee' articles. Next in the list comes Stonewall Jackson. What strikes me as a little singular, however, is that there is not anywhere displayed a picture of Jeff. Davis, either as advertisement or otherwise, nor have I in any private place I have visited since coming here seen his picture. Whether he is so precious that it is considered profane to illustrate him, or whether he is not a particular favorite, I can not say, but such is the fact.

"Fortunes are being made by this pandering to a Southern taste. No matter how worthless the article may be, call it after a Southern General, and adorn it with his picture, and what a sale it will have! The coffers of Northern manufactories are being filled by means of this Southern folly. The very men whom these people would not lift out of the mire to save their lives, or give a penny to, to keep them from starving, are yet lifted into wealth and enabled to live in luxury. Here is a hotel, in Vicksburg, whose proprietor was in the Federal army, and every pulsa-

tion of his heart is in that direction. Yet he is a shrewd fellow, and, being in trade, must please his customers, so his hotel is profusely decorated with coarse pictures of Southern Generals, which delight the eyes of his patrons. Over his desk, where he makes up his cash, there looks down upon him the face of Lee, and whichever way he turns, either in office, dining-room, or parlor, some Southern General stares at him. He has done the thing up to a turn, and is coining money in consequence. If his patrons knew the deception he was practicing, they would hang him to the first lamp-post. Go into his private room where he sleeps, as I did, and there you 'll find over his little secretary a fine steel-engraving of Lincoln, and on the walls in different parts of the room are pictures of Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan. None but the initiated are allowed to enter this room. What a living deception he is practicing, but it swells his bank account, and that 's the cure-all.

"Just now there are springing up Southern life and Southern fire insurance companies, whose principal merits are a majority of true Southern men in the board of directory, and a Southern General for a figure-head as president.

"But this is now the season of small things, and the mania is confined to articles of food, of drink, and of home consumption. These pictures, seen every-where, and the articles and localities they advertise, entice the people to expenditures of money, and to places which their means do not justify and neither temperance nor good morals permit. They serve only the purpose of enriching the few, and they, chiefly men and communities to whom these people are, in every respect, foreign in sympathy. The whole thing is in bad taste.

"If there has to be this profusion of pictures, in view of the immigration pouring into the country, it would be better to vary them a little, showing here a Southern General,

there a Federal General. But there is no mixing down here now, it is the straight Confederate or nothing! Indeed, a pearl of the first water would go begging at a penny, if it were wrapped in the photograph of a Federal General. Well, these pictures please the Southern eye; the North has caught the idea, and is utilizing it to advertise its own wares. It is the kind of medicine suited to the Southern stomach, and is a prolific source of profit to Northern doctors. And, after all, what can be more harmless than Generals on paper, or their names on the side-wheels of steamboats? They look bright and gaudy in their newness. Thus shows this second fire bright and glowing throughout the South. But these pictures will pale and fade away in time, and the steamboats will rot, just as will pale and fade away this second fire, and then these foolish people will see how, in pleasing their fancy, in gratifying what is a coarse love, and not a refined sentiment which always shuns display—seeking the cloister to breathe out its devotion—they have enriched the North. Then they will certainly feel more chagrin than the new-comer or tourist now feels annoyance at sight of these things, and that boy is perhaps now born, who will see the day when a steamboat named after a Federal General will ride the Mississippi river, the admiration of all from St. Louis to the gulf, and when the pictures of Federal Generals will, through all the South, be regarded as fit companions for Generals of the Revolution."

It came out during the summer, that the steamer "Robt. E. Lee," mentioned in my letter, and over which the Southern people were so jubilant, was principally owned by Boston men, having been built with Boston capital. This news created a great storm of indignation, and its captain,—a whole-souled, courteous, big-hearted Southern gentleman, who had come up by degrees from the lower deck to the post of commander, honestly earning every stage of promotion, and now the beau ideal of a thorough steamboat-

man, beloved by all who knew him,—had to publish a card to his patrons, apologizing for the fact, and saying he had now bought Boston out, and that the "Lee,' was, in every sense, as her name indicated, a Southern boat. And, thereupon, the Southern breast became pacified, although for a long time the captain was growled at for having gone to Boston to borrow money to build his boat.

CHAPTER XXXI.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS ON THE SITUATION.

I SHALL here give the reader further extracts from letters written during my labor-hunting experience at Vicksburg, these having been written while every thing was fresh in my mind, are more apt to be substantially correct than any thing I might now write, trusting only to my recollection.

"What a despotic disposition there is in these people—which prompts them to compel, if possible, all in their midst, no matter what may have been their previous life or training, to think exactly as they do. Instead of a feeling of surprise or distrust at finding men fresh from the North who sympathize with them, and who denounce as they denounce, they seem rather to be surprised at not finding it.

"They never appear for a moment to doubt the sincerity of expressions in their favor, on the part of newcomers. In fact they seem to be perfectly blind to the idea that there can be any other mode of thought than theirs. A Northern man who comes here, either as a visitor or to

live, is expected immediately to share the quarrels of the South and to adopt its customs; that is, among other things, to drink whisky as often as the natives do, to take a hand at poker, and, above all, to carry a pistol, under penalty of being branded as a coward! It never seems to enter their minds to doubt the sincerity of the expressions of a man who comes among them after his habits are formed, and whose whole mode of life and action has been the very opposite of theirs, and yet, the next day after his arrival, is found abusing that which they abuse, and blessing that which they bless. No, they never doubt such a man! He is reliable, trustworthy, and a good fellow.

"Nor does there seem to be any disposition shown to lay aside any of their prejudices, except so far as the power of the bayonet compels them. 'Here we stand,' they say, 'and here we will continue to stand. If immigration from the North wants to come to us, and will believe, act, and talk as we do, it is all right. Let it come. We can help it spend its money; we can take advantage of the friendship the black people feel for it in securing labor for us, and thus drive a profitable bargain.'

"There is a sort of an idea that we who come here from the North, must come because we are disgusted with that country. They say a man does not leave the country he was born and reared in, unless he has had enough of it, and he does not go to a new country, unless he is willing to adopt the habits of its people, as well as its customs and mode of thought. They seem to have a notion that those of us who were in the Federal army, were there because we were, in some way, dragooned into it, and that we are now here ready to sympathize with, and feel for them; in short, that we are so much plastic clay, ready to receive our impressions from them.

"There is nothing in their conversation which implies belief that there are two sides to a question. There are

no two sides to their question. Whatever they do is right. Whatever the North does, is wrong. Southern people are all saints. Northern people are all sinners. The South is the embodiment of honor and chivalry—the North, of meanness and depravity. Said one Massachusetts man to another, both of whom had lived in the South for twenty years:

"'Why is it, that we hate Yankees so much worse than the native Southerners?'"

"'I reckon it is because we know how mean and low-down they are, from having been born among 'em,' he replied.

"From this, it would seem that it is actually true, that Northern men are the extremists. The old story the world over—the convert, the zealot! Perhaps the reason why the Southern people now expect that those who come among them, will immediately adopt their views is, that such was the case before the war, not only so, as is seen by the above question and answer, but those Northerners who settled in the South, had gone beyond the native Southerners in their zeal to demonstrate their devotion.

"It does not seem to occur to the Southern people that, for years before the war, mainly those came South to live who sympathized with the institution of slavery, or such as had no fixed principles, and could take on the hue and sentiment of any community where they might chance to find themselves; that there were, also, other classes who came here, such as the teachers, and preachers for the supposed wealthy families, who frequently married into those families, and thus became the same in sentiment as they were in interest. They do not reflect that Northern men who came here before the war, soon became slave-holders themselves, and thus holding a common property with the Southern people, they had a common interest with them; but that

there being no such common property now, there can be no such common interest. The idea has not yet been even conceived that there can or will be fraternization on any other subject, or that there will be any necessity for it. No, slavery—a modified form just now—is here to unite all hearts, as in the olden time.

"The fact is, there is no reason about these people. It is all impulse. Born, or living under a semi-tropical sun, the blood runs warmly through their veins. What is in the heart, is instantly in the brain. The desire and the possession must be simultaneous. There is no stopping to reason whether or not the desire is feasible, or for the common good, since for them reason does not exist. Once the object in heart and brain, and there is the dash for it.

"Nowhere is there any evidence that the lessons of the war have taught them wisdom. Its discipline seems only to have lasted while the punishment lasted. They say they only stopped because they were physically unable to continue the contest—not from any conviction that they were in the wrong—and that, thanks to the President, the stop is but temporary. Their experience in the crucible has not taken out the dross. The fires are being rekindled for the second conflict, and this time, they say, they will come out victorious.

"Thus, you will see, the Southern people are still spoiled children; still reaching for the fruit that has been taken from them, and because it was once theirs, and because they still desire it, they are determined to possess it again. And so, because they desire the new-comer to think and act as they do, why, of course, it must be so, for the reason that it always was so.

"There will, therefore, of necessity be antagonism between the two elements. First, because the new-comer is satisfied with the results of the war—the Southerner is not; second, for the reason that the former has no predju-

dice about employing labor and paying it wages—the Southerner has; third, the new-comer will naturally believe in educating, in Christianizing and assisting the negro to become a property-holder, while these ideas are exceedingly odious to the Southerner. These antagonisms may or may not be active, but they will be decided every-where. No doubt what will do more than any thing else to soften and, in time, to dispel them, will be for the South to realize, to a moderate extent, its dream of wealth through large crops and high prices of cotton. Money is the best known lubricator! On the contrary, a failure to realize this dream will make the present hard times still harder, and, such is human nature, the Southern people will naturally seek an excuse for their failure in the short-comings of free-labor, and in the teachings and influences of the new-comer, and, therefore, the antagonisms just mentioned will become more and more active and decided.

"But that is all in the future. Just now there is everywhere apparent an exaggerated idea that neither the results of the war, nor the new-comer, are to produce any change in public sentiment here; there must still be the same despotism which was the natural result of slavery.

"It is a people with these sentiments which have to deal with this crude mass of free-labor which the war has thrown upon the country. This is now pliable in their hands; they are the architects and the builders who are to take it and mold and fashion it into a thing of use and beauty, or into an instrument of evil.

"It is this bone, muscle, sinew, and flesh, and this feeble brain which is to be taught that its freedom is not that of idleness, but that it is a freedom to work and to receive for its own use and disposition the fruits of such work, each man to choose his own master, to whom shall belong that portion of his time allotted to labor, as completely and as solely as his body had been formerly owned. It is also to be taught that freedom neither allows

nor justifies stealing or fighting, or vice of any kind; and that stealing does not simply mean taking another's property, but that it means as well taking the time it has sold to another and idling it away, as well as a failure to render efficient labor, when it has the ability and capacity so to do. It is to be taught that there is no personal wrong which there is not a law to remedy, and that under no circumstance is it justifiable to take the law in its own hand, and itself inflict the penalty.

"And, above all, the courts of the country are to be freely opened to it, to protect it in its rights, as well as to prove to it that it has such rights.

"It is this labor, well skilled in farming—men and women in stature, but babes in the role of freemen—which, in such hands, has for its task to test the experiment of cotton-raising in the South. Alas that the artists do not show more honesty of purpose—something of a determination to make the best of it! How much of future suffering a wise, prudent, and economical course this year would save."

CHAPTER XXXII.

IMPRESSIONS AND EXPERIENCES IN VICKSBURG.

I FOUND every thing in Vicksburg on the stir, at the early muster-out of the several negro regiments—the hotels were full of planters, in search of labor, and the competition was lively enough. Lavish promises were being made on all sides, and each planter was commending his own plantation in glowing terms to the apparently credulous freedmen.

It was really true, that the great mass of negroes

shortly to be mustered out, as well as those still remaining in Vicksburg, either from the mustering-out of former regiments, or from the small army of camp-followers, servants, and others, were sincerely anxious to get into the country, and the statement circulated that they were disposed as a class to swarm into the cities, and remain there, was not correct. The officers of the colored regiments assured me that, with an occasional exception, the men of their commands wanted to leave Vicksburg as soon as they were mustered out, and could find good homes; and from the heads of the Freedmens' Bureau I learned that the same wish prevailed among the black people generally, but that there was a widespread feeling of distrust as to their treatment in the country, which was the real secret of their hesitation; and but for this, they gave it as their opinion there would not be negroes enough left in the city to meet its current demand for day-laborers.

There was no diversity of opinion on this point, among either army or government officers, or the class of men who were in sympathy with the negroes, and to whom they would express themselves freely.

A characteristic of the black people which struck me as singular was that there did not seem to be any desire on their part to return to the places they had left as slaves. On the contrary, the desire with them was, to find a spot where they could make themselves a home. It was just as if the white soldiers, on being mustered out, had almost universally sought homes in different States from those in which they had enlisted. It would seem from this that the black people had not experienced any real home-feeling in the localities where they had endured their servitude, else they would now feel a disposition to return to them. No, not one of them talked of going home; their chief desire seemed to be to find a home. Occasionally something would be said about hunting up women they had lived with before the war, and children which they had by these,

when they came to be well-located, but there was not much of this. The predominant idea appeared to be, that their release from slavery had cut them loose from all former associations; that in their changed relations of freedmen, they were, so to speak, born anew. Not that they reasoned this thing out at all, but this was the practical working of it.

In many cases, the "took-up women," called wives, doubtless became camp-followers,—cooking, washing, and so-forth, for the soldiers,—and in this way held on to the men who had taken them up. With all the colored regiments there was about an equal number of women to the men. Most of them had each either a child or children. All lived with men, on the "took-up" principle, with but an occasional exception. Doubtless it was this very system of unlicensed association which had much to do with eradicating the home feeling which they must otherwise have experienced. If they had left wives or children behind, they would long to return to them; but either their "took-up" women had followed the regiment, or new women were "taken-up" with, wherever the regiment spent any time, and so, when the war was over, these frequent changes had blotted out every feeling of a domestic attachment to the places which had known them as slaves, leaving each negro free to take his latest favorite (if the first had not clung to him during his camp-life), with what children he might have by her, and find a home.

The military marriages had evidently done but little in the way of remedying the "taking-up" process. The customs of a lifetime could not be removed, even by the strong arm of the military during the rough experience of camp-life. The morals of an army are never improved during war, and so the negroes, who had been educated as slaves to a system called marriage, but which was in fact only a system of propagation, had with little or no restraint from their officers, allowed their strong animal propensities to run riot with them, and every new bivouac was the scene

of fresh license; all thought of a home in the past was obliterated, with all desire to seek for it now that they were free to do so.

The every-day negro life, which I saw about me, was not such as I had read of in Northern books, or had heard loudly asserted to be true by Southern men. Here they were herding together like a flock of sheep. Even broad daylight was scarcely any restraint to the gratification of their desires, but when night came on it was fearful. Men, women, and children were piled along in promiscuous rows in their hovels and in their camps. The picture can not be painted too black; it would all be tame in sight of the reality. Men were only restrained by fear of personal violence from trespassing on the ground temporarily occupied by another, and women by the fear of having their eyes scratched out by jealous sisters. This fear of personal violence, on either side, was the only break-water to the tide of vice, which was sweeping through the haunts and dwelling-places of the blacks. Was this one of the results of the war? Said a thoughtful man in Vicksburg to me when I questioned him:

"The restraint of the master, in order to procure a rapid increase in the number of slaves, is gone. The legal restraint of husband and wife is not here, has never been here, because marriage did not exist among the slaves of the South. Sometimes a sort of a farce was practiced, which squinted that way, but it was no marriage in fact. No more was virtue or chastity taught them."

Was it any wonder, then, herded together as they were, in view of this previous education, that they continued its practices—the only difference being that what had once been confined, to accomplish a rapid increase, was now promiscuous? If the glimpses I was getting of the black people were correct pictures then had the Northern writers on the subject scribbled much foolishness, and the Southern people practiced deception—Northern writers, first, in de-

scribing the pangs incident to the separation of families as being terrible, and the home feeling surrounding the negro cabin as very strong; the Southern people, in stating that the blacks were only allowed to live together when married, and that they were taught to be virtuous.

If the pangs attendant upon separation were indeed so great, why, now that these negro men were free to go where they chose, did they not return to the women and children they had left behind? Why, if the home feeling was so great, did they not make a home there whence they came? Alas, I fear that it was simply because neither the pang nor the home feeling existed. The "taking-up" process, called marriage, made a home for the separated ones, wherever they might be located, within a week after their separation, and the old "wife" or "husband" was at once forgotten in the new.

These statements will be humiliating to the extremes of the North and the South, and I make them with hesitation. But I find them justified by my observation, and therefore I write them down. It is not the ideal negro nor the ideal Southerner that I am dealing with. I am dealing with the negro classes as I found them in every-day life—in their working dress; the negro with the odor of the plantation on him, just as servitude made him, with all his ways and ideas and customs, his short-comings, his vices, and his virtues. And so with the Southerner, and the new-comer also. Whatever of good or of bad I found in them, is to be freely and fairly shown, remembering, as I do, that the plant follows the kernel, and whatever there is of defect, or to be praised, is but the legitimate fruit of the plant.

What I have observed of the negro and the Southerner I have not hesitated to speak. If it is not altogether complimentary, neither is the picture of my own class. The former may improve, and so may we. We are, in this year of grace 1866, but babes in the development of the agricultural resources of the South, under the new order of

things—all of us—each class in its way. The negro is a distrustful, suspicious babe, with the vaguest idea as to the true meaning of freedom. The Southerner is a vicious, rebellious babe; and the Northern new-comer is a very ignorant babe. But we all have to draw our nourishment from the same breast; we are all traveling the same road; our goal is a common one, and, in time, we may come to be the best of friends, though we are looking askance at each other now. The weal or woe of this Southern country is in our hands. If the good shall predominate, it will be well; if not so, we shall be largely the sufferers. Our bed will be one of roses or of thorns, just as we elect. If our short-comings be the result of ignorance, we shall be pitied; if of bad intent, we shall be blamed. But, in either case, ours will be the suffering.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MY RETURN TO THE HEBRON PLANTATION WITH LABOR, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

Upon comparing notes, I found that the Colonel of one of the negro regiments had rented the plantation next above us on the river, and that he was going to take his labor from among the discharged soldiers of his command. He thought he could, without doubt or trouble, take up all the labor we should want, with his own; and thus our great necessity seemed to be supplied. Previous to the muster-out, he had purchased his mules and his general outfit, and got them all together, so that on the day following the muster-out he was ready to leave for his new home.

The Colonel wanted about forty hands, and we needed about thirty-five, making seventy-five in all. But when the hour of departure came, only about sixty reported, including women. There were about thirty-five men and twenty-five women, with perhaps from twelve to fifteen children. At least twenty others promised to follow a day or two after.

We made a pretty sight when we left Vicksburg with our large cargo of freedmen. It was said to be the choicest lot of laborers which had left that port during the season. There was not an indifferent one among them, if appearances and their record in the army were to be relied on. The men assisted in getting the Colonel's mules down to the boat—a wild, unbroken lot—and handled them as if they were used to it. So eager did they seem to be to get to work, that some of them picked out the particular mules they were going to plow with, and when the plows themselves came down, they inspected and handled them in such a way as to denote undoubted skill. The plows were of the Calhoun pattern, and were therefore orthodox. The Colonel's hobby was deep plowing, and so he had procured a couple of sub-soil plows, which the negroes declared to be of "no sort of recount." They did not appear to be in the least troubled at the lateness of the season. "We 'll ebberlastin'ly t'ar up de groun', when we gits into it," said they, one and all, and their enthusiasm to "get into it" was unbounded. "I 's been soljerin' for more 'n three years, but I reckon I have n't forgot how to handle de plow," exclaimed a thick-lipped fellow. At the question of his knowledge of plowing, another answered, with a snort, "Kin de duck swim?"

It was highly refreshing to see so much zeal for farm-labor, and it made me feel that if we had these hands for the Hebron plantation, our task in the future would be easy. But we should get a portion of them, and in a few days the rest would come along, and then we should have

enough. It certainly looked as if our labor struggle was over.

There were a good many planters at the landing to see us off, and they looked at our magnificent force with unmistakable jealousy. There was no necessity of watching these splendid fellows—they meant "business." No labor-broker or labor-jumper need try to tamper with them; and that class of persons evidently felt it, for they hung around on the outskirts of our crowd, and did not dare to mix with them.

Several of the men had been the orderly-sergeants of their companies, and others of them had held some non-commissioned office; so there was much calling of sergeant so-and-so and corporal so-and-so, in their excitement evidently forgetting that they were no longer in the army. There was one little fellow they called Sergeant Watson, who appeared greatly in demand. He was not over five feet in height, small of bone, and spare in flesh, perhaps weighing one hundred and twenty pounds. He had an active eye, and a laugh which could be distinctly heard for two squares. He was full of fun and humor, and kept whatever crowd he was in constantly stirred with his drollery. His figure and appearance were any thing but prepossessing, but his manner was winning, and he was evidently very bright. It seems he had been sold from North Carolina into Mississippi, and had been taught black-smithing by his last master. During the marches of the regiment, he found a beautiful quadroon woman, whom he fell passionately in love with, and, notwithstanding his ungainly and diminutive figure, he won her consent to follow the command to Vicksburg, where they were married by some army chaplain, under the auspices of the Freedmen's Bureau.

Jimmy had his wife with him, and he was evidently very fond of her; and well he might be, for she was, indeed, a most beautiful woman. Her figure was commanding, and

her face would have claimed attention anywhere. The white blood in her veins predominated so strongly that the pink showed clearly on her cheek. Her eyes were large and coal-black, and were fringed with lashes equally black, and of the most luxuriant growth, as was her long, wavy black hair, which was plaited in folds, and hung down her back fully two feet. Her mouth was large, and when her red, pouting lips were opened in laughter, they exposed rows of teeth of dazzling whiteness; and she had dimples in her cheeks, such as are seen frequently in babyhood and childhood, but seldom in maturity. Her general appearance bespoke a rich, ripe tropical growth. When I first saw her she wore a pink callico dress, so arranged that the sleeve afforded glimpses of the most finely rounded arm; and there was the small delicate hand, with taper wrist and fingers; while from under her dress peeped a foot so diminutive it must have challenged admiration, even if the fair shape above had not been there. There was no superabundance of clothing about her, so her simple pink gown wrapped her closely, bringing out her perfectly rounded form. She was as straight as an arrow; and her lovely head sat proudly upon her equally lovely shoulders. There was no apparent consciousness, on her part, of her dazzling beauty—it was simply the expression of perfect physical health, and ripe animal growth, which made her appear so majestic. And what a lightness and elasticity of step she showed as she sprang on the boat, aided by her active, wiry, gallant little husband. Mary, for that was her name, mixed and mingled, with perfect freedom, with the negroes of the party, taking her place on the lower deck with the common herd. The ebony faces about her brought out her marvelous loveliness in a still more striking contrast, while the simplicity and modesty of her manner, the frequent smile, occasional merry, not boisterous, laugh at some witticism on the part of her Jimmy, the perfect unconsciousness of her great

wealth of beauty, the gracefulness of her very position, all told unmistakably that there was gentle blood in her veins. She undoubtedly belonged to the class of slaves known as house servants, and had been not only the property, but actually the child, of some planter, under whose roof the bleaching out process had been carried on until here was a magnificently well-developed woman with only a small portion of African blood in her veins. The abolition of slavery had doubtless nipped in the bud what would have been either a forced or voluntary career, on her part, by placing her in the arms of a husband instead of the embrace of some owner. She did not appear to feel the least out of place with her rude surroundings, although she looked so. There were no longing glances toward the upper guard of the steamboat, where the white folks stood eyeing her beauty. She seemed to be perfectly satisfied where she was, and apparently unconscious that she was the particular object of gaze. But I noticed, as her Jimmy brought their "plunder" on board, there was a neat black-walnut bedstead, a clean mattress, and a bundle out of which peeped bed-clothes unmistakably clean. There was undoubted neatness in these which corresponded with that seen in her pretty pink dress, her carefully plaited hair, and her well-shod feet. There was a distinction, after all, between her and the common herd; a delicate, but decided distinction, in these little belongings, as well as in her person. She was the acknowledged queen, although mingling freely with her subjects.

Strange freaks had been played among these hitherto slaves. There, for example, walked a tall, straight fellow, with a copper-colored face, piercing black eye, high cheek-bones, long, straight hair—all unmistakable signs of the Indian—and so strongly marked that you naturally expected to hear the "war-whoop." There were the arms, the sweeping legs, the long stride, and the restlessness of manner, which fully confirmed one in the belief that the father of

this man must have been a full-blooded Indian—perhaps some chief of his tribe, from the dignity about the fellow, and his capacity to command. As the Colonel told me, he was one of his orderly-sergeants, and a splendid executive officer. But there was the unmistakable negro in his face, too.

And there stood another with a dark-brown face, but with so much of the German in it, and his whole square-set frame, that you at once thought of cork-opera, and wondered how soon he would take his negro paint off, and end his disguise. But no—he was a genuine negro. He looked like a veritable Bug Gargle, however, with his square-set features and frame.

Some one of the party called loudly for Sergeant Hart, and he came sputtering to the front, with an undoubted French accent, sidling walk and small figure. He sputtered his broken French-English out so rapidly that you could scarcely catch a word he said. There was abundance of fun in that little half-negro, half-French hide.

Only about fifty per cent. of these negroes were of a simon-pure black material. The rest were badly mixed, and yet they were all slaves, and never saw the cold side of Mason and Dixon's line!

Long after night had set in, I wandered down upon the lower deck, and there the black people were scattered all about—now on bags of grain, now on bales of hay, and now on the rough deck, with only a stick of cord-wood for a pillow, all wrapped in slumber. The stars shone bright in the heavens, glistening on many an up-turned face, as the steamer took its way around the bends of the river. The paddle-wheels pounded the water in a monotonous measure, which sounded a lullaby to these quiet sleepers, and, save here and there a war-worn, or camp-worn army-blanket for a covering, night was their only mantle. In the early evening, thus grouped about, they had chanted their rude melodies, which were so many cradle-songs to these grown up babes, for they had apparently fallen where

slumber overtook them. There was no separation of sexes or of families. There had been song or camp-story, then drowsiness, and then sleep—and here they lay, all shades and hues, telling the story of the century of mixing, in such language as could not be misinterpreted.

And yet they were not all there. I missed Jimmy and his beautiful Mary. They were no where to be seen. When I went up stairs again, as I was promenading on the outside of the cabin, I found them. There were two chairs drawn together, and here was Mary fast asleep on her husband's shoulder!—his ungainly black hand, one finger of which was adorned with a huge brass ring, holding tightly her taper-fingers, as if he thought her all but an angel that might fly away from him in sleep, and would thus hold her fast. His coarse soldier-overcoat covered her bosom, as if he would conceal its heaving from the vulgar gaze, and his faded uniform pillowed her head, setting off its beauty as the rustic frame sets off the picture. When the shades of night had fallen, this uncouth negro man, as if fearing harm to his wife, had found this quiet nest for her, and there he sat, his bright eyes glancing in every direction, and only occasionally nodding through all its watches, while she slumbered in his arms. Here again her distinction showed itself. Colored passengers on the upper-guards, were in violation of all rule, so this pair had taken their position by stealth, but as no one complained of them they were allowed to remain, and they would return to their companions below at daybreak. Money at this time would not buy negroes a place on the upper deck, unless they appeared there as maids or body-servants. The rest were banished to the regions below, with the mules, the cattle, and the freight. And yet, from the shades among those on that lower deck, there had been a more intimate association between the whites and blacks than merely of treading a common floor!

In course of time we reached the village wharf-boat, but

the stopping-place for the Colonel's expedition was three miles above, and, remembering our fearful and expensive experience of having our outfit landed there, and how the "mischievous boys" sometimes stampeded the labor of the new-comers, it was arranged that our negroes also should get off at the Colonel's landing.

After breakfast I rode up to the Colonel's place. I found him, his outfit and laborers still on the bank at the landing, and there was great commotion over the reception they had met. It seems that the man who owned the plantation —or rather, who held the title to it, for it was mortgaged beyond its value—had not yet returned from his flight to Texas; that he had two agents, one at Vicksburg and one at the village landing; that, while the Vicksburg agent had rented the plantation to Col. Gray (this was the Colonel's name) the village agent had rented it to Col. Byron, an old resident of the county, who had already taken possession, and was at work with a half-dozen hands breaking up the ground. Both would-be tenants had written leases, but Col. Byron was in possession, and declared his intention of remaining at all hazards, while Col. Gray was demanding the place with equal warmth.

The two agents would have to be consulted, and there was much parley ahead, so the Colonel concluded, if the hands wished to do so, they could go down and work for us, until the question was decided, if we would pay, feed, and lodge them, which we were only too glad to agree to. They were all eager to get to work, and so, after they had cooked and eaten their breakfast on the river bank, all declared their readiness to start off to the Hebron plantation. The Colonel detained half a dozen to look after the mules and watch his property, Jimmy and Mary being among the number.

When I arrived at his camp, Mary was preparing the morning meal for the Colonel. Jimmy had gotten a few bricks together, on which the fire was built. A couple of

crotched sticks, driven into the ground, with a pole across them, served as a crane, where the pot was hung to boil the coffee. A skillet, with a cover to it, sitting on a bed of coals, and its top covered with coals, was the bake-oven, out of which Mary soon took some splendid-looking hot biscuit, while in another skillet, without a cover, the pork was being fried, and in still another, a pone of hoe-cake was just taking on its coat of brown. Jimmy had improvised a table near by, in the shape of the Colonel's camp-chest, on which Mary proceeded to set tin plates, and a tin cup for coffee, with pewter spoons, iron knives and forks, tin pepper-box, and salt-celler. After the Colonel had eaten, the table was again set, and Mary and Jimmy took their morning meal, Jimmy devouring the corn pone, leaving the flour biscuit for Mary.

While the breakfast was being cooked, the smoke seemed very fond of Mary, and on whichever side of the fire she would go, it followed her, filling her black eyes until they ran tears. Her sleeves were rolled up, and her dress looped, so as to get around easily, and thus, at her morning task, she looked, if any thing, more charming than the night before. Jimmy hung around her, ready to assist, apparently happy to be near her. When the fire burned low, he would get down on all fours and blow it into a blaze again, and as fast as the wood burned out, he supplied new sticks, hunting about on the river bank for them. Was a bucket of water wanted? Jimmy was off to the river for it, so that Mary was simply the executive officer of the morning meal, as Jimmy performed all the drudgery.

"Dat darkey is pow'ful choice of his nigger," said the negro of the German features, "he'll spile her wid his pettin'." But Mary seemed to appreciate her devoted husband, and was constantly showing him some little token of affection. She certainly looked as if she was born to "spile" in the way Jimmy was trying it. There was unquestionably good Carolina blood running in the veins of

this bleached specimen of the negro race, because right here he was reversing the negro characteristic, which makes the woman the dray-horse, and adopting the Anglo-Saxon habit, which makes her rather the pet. This blood may have been put into Jimmy's veins illegitimately—and it was, of course—but here was the legitimate inheritance of some polite Carolina planter bestowing itself upon one who had enough white blood in her veins to fully appreciate it; and it was the result of such white grafts upon these negro stalks, which so attracted us. It was like finding the notes of the mocking-bird issuing from the throat of a crow. In other words, and in plain English, it was not the negro blood in the veins of Jimmy and Mary which was informing the story I have just written about them, but it was the white blood; and yet, Jimmy told me that both his own and Mary's mother were as "black as de ace ob spades," and he told me further who his own and Mary's fathers were; one was a prominent Carolina planter, and the other was an extensive Mississippi planter, and both of them had been in Congress, and were noted politicians, intense in their hatred to abolitionists and believers in negro equality.

"Dey did n't preach what dey practiced," said Jimmy, with one of his hearty laughs when he told me about it.

I took the larger portion of the new hands down into the bramble-patches, and what a scattering we made of them! It was plain to be seen that these men and women had worked in brier and cane-brakes before. What great heaps they piled up, and the bon-fires we made that first day were pleasant to look upon. We scared away rabbits, coveys of quails, and opened land to sunlight, and made it ready for the plow, which had not been so exposed, or in a condition to plow, for years. And all day long the plantation resounded with rude negro melodies.

Scarcely had I reached our cabins in the morning with our new force, when the square-built negro stepped out from

the crowd and said he would like to lead the "plow-gang." "I's used to de bizness," said he; "de niggers on dis place hab done pow'ful loose plowin', I seed as we come'd along, an I'd like to show you what a cotton furrow is, if you please, sah."

I told him to detail a number of his party for plowmen, and gave Billy orders to put the same number of old hands, who had been doing the "loose" plowing, into the trash-gang, so as to give each one of those detailed a team, which he proceeded to do. The long-armed, Indian-looking negro, said he would like to "lead de trash-gang, an make de briers and brambles sick;" and so, after the square-built, German negro, whose name was Wash., had selected what he wanted for plowmen, we turned over the rest to Reub., the Indian negro.

Billy was wild with delight at our prospect, and Clara said:

"It 'pears as ef Reb times is come back agin, an dis crowd 'll work de free niggers down to de bone, in jes two days."

And indeed, the work did now go forward rapidly. The wire edge was on, and such clearings as they made, and such plowing as they did, put completely to shame our previous shabby work. For the first time, we really had help, and yet I felt it to be only temporary relief,—perhaps at most only for a week, as by that time the Colonel would doubtless get the place, as it soon became known that the village agent was not really so much of an agent after all. He had no positive instructions to rent the place, had only acted on the ground of having been the owner's attorney before the war, while the Vicksburg agent had written instructions to rent it. But the man in possession, although without legal right, had nine points on his side, and then he was a Southener, which knocked the beam in his favor. The Vicksburg agent made a show of anger at the treatment which his lease had met, while the village lawyer be-

came really enraged, insisting that his client should remain on the place, and so Colonel Gray reluctantly concluded to give up the fight; although at one time he decided to take the place by force of arms, and actually organized his men for that purpose. This cruel disappointment left Colonel Gray's labor and outfit on his hands.

The sequel of this story was, that Byron did not make any crop and could not pay his rent, and the owner of the place undertook to make Colonel Gray legally responsible for his contract with the Vicksburg agent, and to collect the rent from him.

Colonel Gray thought seriously of moving his force to a plantation in another part of the country which he said he had the refusal of. If any part of the force he had brought should go away with him we were satisfied they would all go, which would of course leave us in the lurch, and, it being so late in the season, we should certainly have to give up our planting enterprise. So, in order to get his labor, we entered into negotiations with him which ended as follows: We took his outfit, costing thirty-five hundred dollars, off his hands, paying him the cash for it; contracted to give him all the profits which should be made on fifty acres of our Hebron plantation; to allow him to fit up and run our saw-mill, at joint expense—we to advance the money for the same—the profits to be shared equally: we to make no charge for the trees; we to work his fifty acres just as we worked our own, all in common; also to pay him at the rate of fifteen hundred dollars a year to act as a sort of assistant manager, and to give him a sixty-days' leave of absence to go home and visit his family, during which time he was to be under pay.

This seemed like a hard bargain for us, but his laborers we must have; and the idea was that their Colonel would be able to get all the work out of them which was in them.

It was sometime before we could get him to agree to entertain a proposition from us, so fully was he wedded to the idea of planting himself. But when, finally, after much persuasion, he agreed to do so, it was clearly to be seen, by his manner, that he fully realized the fortune he had in his labor, and made up his mind to work this mine for all there was in it, and so he drove us from one valuable provision in his favor to another, until we were almost crazed when we thought what would be the result of it all. Of course here was, at best, an enormous increase in the Dobson estimate of expense for the year, and here were the revenues of fifty acres to be taken from the credit side of the account. These last blows to the Dobson statement placed it beyond recognition. But there was no turning back, and so we tried to console ourselves with the idea that his outfit had been bought cheap for cash. The mules, the principal item of expense, we knew to be particularly cheap, because we had helped the Colonel purchase them in Vicksburg; the provisions we should need for our current use; we thus hoped to get rid of the outfit part of our bargain without a great loss. As for the saw-mill, we had great expectations from it, although no profits from this source had been considered in the Dobson estimate. It seemed to want but little in the way of repairs, and there were our two hundred acres of woodland, with its valuable timber, which Hampson had dwelt upon. Perhaps, with reasonable management, the sawing would give us back the profits on the fifty acres which were to go to Colonel Gray, as well as help to make up some of the other items of unexpected expense which had weekly confronted us. It might be that Dobson had not said any thing about the profits from the saw-mill in his estimate, because he knew there would, of necessity, be unexpected items of expense which the "*lagniape*" of the saw-mill would make good. Colonel Gray was an old lumberman, and while just now he seemed to have by far the best of us in the trade, perhaps the utiliz-

ing of his former experience would open up to us an unexpected source of profit, and our more than liberal concessions to him might yet put money in our pockets. It was so like human nature while the prospects for cotton profits were dwindling, to reach out for something else to hang hope upon, even though it was that uncertain product, a saw-mill!

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ADJUTANT JOHNSON RETURNS WITH REINFORCEMENTS.

One afternoon, while yet in the midst of the task of organizing the feeding and the division into squads of our new force, the hoarse whistle of a steamboat sounded for our landing, and when I galloped down to the river bank, I found Adjutant Johnson disembarking with a crowd of some twenty negroes and two white men.

"I am here at last," he said, with an attempt at sprightliness, as I greeted him; but there were the quavering voice, the staggering gait, and the sunken eye, still more apparent than when I had so reluctantly said good-bye to him, and his wan appearance shocked me beyond measure. Disease had indeed been busily at work on his feeble frame during his long and toilsome journey.

As if noticing my painful expression of face, and divining the cause to be himself, he continued:

"Only a little banged up by the journey; I 'll be all right after a night's rest."

And then he introduced me to the two white men; one was an engineer I had sent for, and the other "is to act as my assistant until I get stronger," said the invalid.

"Better get him onto a bed as soon as we can," whis-

pered the assistant in my ear. "He has had a succession of bad turns since we commenced our journey, and is really very low. I begged him not to dress, but he insisted upon doing so, saying he did n't want to be taken off the steamboat on a litter like an invalid—he wanted to look upon the plantation so dear to him, standing on his legs like a man, and not with his face to the sky; and he was particularly anxious to see the twinkle of your eyes, Mr. Harding, when they should rest on his reinforcement."

It was very difficult to induce him to take my horse and ride to the quarters; and, indeed he at first refused positively to do so, declaring that he could "walk as well as any one" (it was three-quarters of a mile!) It was only when I resorted to a little deception, telling him I wanted to walk alongside of his assistant, and get the home news—would he oblige me by riding my horse—that I gained his consent; and then I lifted him upon the horse, and when we reached the quarters he dropped from the saddle into my arms, so exhausted that he almost went into a swoon. We carried him to the house and placed him on the bed, where he lay for several hours without opening his eyes, and with only the faintest thread of a pulse.

He had made the long journey; had brought us reinforcements; the excitement was over—this was the reaction. When you consider what this invalid had accomplished, you could not but exclaim "Here lies a hero!"

We gave him in charge of "Ole Clara," and thenceforward, until he bade adieu to "Hebron" she was his constant nurse; and no babe was ever cared for with greater tenderness. Of course our invalid rallied. The nature of the disease was one of "ups and downs." He wrestled manfully with Death, and sometimes it looked, ever so faintly, as if he were going to get the best of him; but it was only the flicker of the candle in the socket, at each recurrence burning feebler. So great was his will that he was not yet "bed-bound." Sometimes, when I reached the plan-

tation in the morning, I would find him dressed and sitting in his rocking-chair, with Clara hovering near him, and once or twice I actually found him leaning on his cane, staggering about the yard almost like a drunken man, and when I remonstrated with him he would reply: "I must take exercise in order to regain my strength; I am no possible account to any one now. I want to hurry and get better!" On the part of Clara, there grew up the affection of mother for child. The good old soul had never experienced the spring of maternal affection quickening into life through a child of her own, and now it burst forth with all the power of a long pent-up stream. It was the old story of the barren woman yearning, during many years, for "bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh," and not finding it; but having, instead, the flood-gates of her maternal affection at last opened by a key in the hand of some chance waif, only, in her state of ignorance, it seemed rather the affection of the bear for the cub. Yes, indeed, Clara would have torn flesh, scratched out eyes, if any one had dared approach her "chile" other than in the gentlest manner.

"Dis chile is as dear to me as the apple o' my eye; he 'longs to hebben, an' if ole Clara holes on to the hem o' his garment he 'll pull her smack into the presence o' Jesus. One night, when Clara was praying on the gallery, an' askin' Jesus to 'store her chile to helf, de angel o' the Lo'd 'peared to her and said: 'Clara! dat's your chile; Jesus gibs him to you—take him Clara. He 's one of the Lo'd's 'n'inted!'"

Some one asked her how the angel looked. "Jes like a white man; and did n't 'pear to hab the leas' predu*diss* agin me on 'count o' my black skin."

There were two articles of diet quite essential to the invalid, namely: fresh meat and milk. It did not seem possible to get either; but love was in the heart of old Clara, that love which is ever fruitful in resource, the love of the

mother for the child. Clara, with her own hands, built a quail-trap, and placed it on the edge of a cane-brake. She was rewarded, on going to her trap the following morning, by finding eight nice, plump quails as prisoners. When she brought them into the quarters, her black face was beaming with delight; she cried, in a loud voice:

"De Lo'd has 'warded ole Clara."

This was the commencement; and always, after that, she kept something fresh on hand—now a meadow-lark, now a squirrel, now a duck, and occasionally a slice of venison, which she would either beg or buy from "the boys," as they brought them in from their evening or Saturday afternoon hunt—this when her invalid would tire of quail, which were always to be had for the snaring.

"Dar was a fellow-s'a'vant back on de plantation 'bout eight miles from here—de plantation I use to 'long to—wid some goats. If I could get out dar I might get one of um wid a kid, which ud gib my chile 'bundance o' milk."

So the old soul trudged off bright and early one morning, on foot and alone, and the evening of the same day she came back, leading a she-goat, with its kid in her arms, saying, "I gist borried it." And so the two essentials were supplied, and under this generous diet her "chile" seemed to thrive.

Fifteen of the negroes Adjutant Johnson had brought were assigned to the different squads, which left us a surplus of five. We told our village merchant we had some surplus hands, and asked him to spread the news among the planters needing help, which he did, and within twenty-four hours we had a dozen applicants for them. We let one man have them all, he promising "gladly" to reimburse us for our outlay, which he never did, though we dunned him repeatedly.

CHAPTER XXXV.

"DE BERRY LARGE."

ONE morning, after things had commenced running along smoothly under our new force, I invited Mrs. Harding and the children to join me in a ride to the plantation, with a triple view of showing off our new labor, giving my family an airing, and arranging for a Sabbath-school on the following Sunday.

We all crowded into one little single-seated buggy—one of the boys between us, and one on a cushioned stool at our feet—and drove off in high glee, taking care not to trespass on our neighbor's yard, so as to bring down her wrath for the second time.

It was a charming morning, and as we drove up the levee birds filled the air with their varied notes. Conspicuous among these was the French mocking-bird. What a world of loveliness is concentrated in this bird! In grace and beauty it is to birds what the deer is to beasts, but one is lost when he attempts to find a comparison for its music. They were flying all about us, at least half a dozen, at once flying and singing. They seemed to be intoxicated with joy, as they flapped along lazily in the air, now shutting their wings, until they almost dropped to the ground, and then lifting themselves up again, by a few long swoops, tracing a succession of curved lines. They could do nothing that did not seem beautiful, and, when it was their mood to cease their flight, using at once their long sweeping tail and wings, so as to let themselves down lightly; then throwing the former up over their backs, and with a most bewitching turn of the head looking at you, as if to say: "How do you like that?"—all the time continuing their

song, showing that singing is with them involuntary. In their sober slate-colors, with their lithe little bodies, how they surpass every thing else of the bird species, however gay its plumage! If all could see the mocking-bird in its natural state, it would no longer be imprisoned—the doors of cages would be thrown open, and this bird of happiness and song would be allowed to fly out and away into congenial latitudes.

Sing on, sweet bird! My love for you was love at first sight, but how much more I grew to love you as I knew you better in the years which followed! You have cheered me in my waking midnight hours by the song from your nest in the vine under my window. You come back to us in the spring-time, after the briefest absence, to sing the old songs again, during all the spring, summer, and autumn seasons. You trust me by rearing your young where my hands could reach them without the aid of ladder. You have been my companion in the long summer months, when the dog-star reigned, and companionship, if it was of human kind, had fled to the North—if it was bird or beast, had sought the densest shade. Then you would show yourself, scarcely moving in the air, hardly flapping you wings, lazily, now perching on the chimney-tops, or uttermost pinnacle of the roof, now on a bush, now in the roadway, panting under the noon-day sun, but never hiding from it—breathing out your songs through the puffs of heat, and ever the very picture of happiness. These birds seem the veriest salamanders, and save for their panting breath, which has something of the human in it, as has every thing they do, one would suppose they shed sun and heat as their feathers do rain. While full of industry, they are yet birds of pleasure. In their nest-building, in seeking food for their young, in their flight, in rest, and in song, there is an air of luxury and nobility about them—it touches every thing they do. Their true home is in the South, and yet they are no respecters of persons! And we loved them for that,

for it was something to find even a bird in this country, in those days, which was not prejudiced against the newcomer!

When we finally reached the plantation there was much staring in the quarters, among the "aunties," at "de Yankee wife."

"Jes like odder 'omen, for all de world," said one.

I seated Mrs. Harding in the store-room, and one after another of the "aunties" dropped in to call upon her. Clara acted as hostess, and introduced each one. On the part of each "aunty" there would be the hand-shake, and, accompanying it, a courtesy, such as one sees dropped by school-girls when coming upon the stage to read a composition. This was their invariable habit. How did they come by it?

One, aunt Martha, a mulatto woman, with soft, creamy skin, was introduced.

Mrs. Harding noticed some blotches on her face, and, her countenance beaming with kindly solicitude, asked her what they meant.

"Dey say I's got de berry-large," she replied, as if it were the most natural thing in the world to have, and one at which no one should be surprised or alarmed.

I heard her reply, and looked around, and there, sure enough, was a well-developed case of small-pox, and my wife had been shaking hands with it—and there she stood aghast, as she contemplated the full extent of her exposure. I took her and the children away from the plantation as fast as wheels could carry us, with the full conviction that we had a long siege of this fearful contagion before us.

Aunt Martha was down with a raging fever the following day, and so Dobson had a cabin fixed up in the quarters, just across the road from the office, and at about three rods distance, as a small-pox hospital, and here, for over two months, we had an average of from one to eight cases, with

some five deaths during its prevalence, among which was that of the white engineer Adjutant Johnson had brought with him.

The small-pox was a legacy of Vicksburg and soldier life, and had been brought up by our new force. Before it had run its course, fully one-third of these were marked by it, and before the epidemic was over I became a thorough adept in the treatment of small-pox.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

HOW CONTRACTS WERE KEPT.

About the middle of April we began to think about getting our cotton-seed upon the plantation, ready for planting. We should have to haul it some four miles, over a very bad road, which would take at least three days. Accordingly, I addressed a note to the gentleman with whom we had previously contracted, asking him to deliver the seed to the bearer, and placed the same in the hands of Billy, who started off with our two teams.

The teams returned in about three hours, the wagons empty, with a message from the gentleman that he had no seed for us!

I sent Billy back with another note, recalling our purchase of seed on the wharf-boat, thinking it possible he might have forgotten it, and with a view of refreshing his memory; but Billy again returned with the same answer.

The next day I met the man in the village, and asked him what it all meant. He said he had been disappointed in his seed, and was sorry to have to break his contract. I mildly suggested that, as he had contracted to furnish

us all the cotton-seed we might need for planting, without any proviso, it was his duty to do so. He replied, in substance, that was not the way Southern people did business; when they made contracts they were in the habit of carrying them out, if perfectly convenient—it was not perfectly convenient for him, and this must be the end of it. And then he rode off with the air of a man who had rather done a favor, than one who had just broken a contract, which would involve us in untold expense.

Here was a perfectly clear case of breach of contract, but it was also just as clear that we should have to swallow it; and so we set to work immediately scouring the country for cotton-seed, visiting, among other places, Memphis and Vicksburg, but finding every-where the desirable, healthy seed already purchased, so that we had to take what was left, and for some of this poor, half-rotten stuff we had to pay a dollar and a half a bushel.

This failure to get what we had purchased cost us from a thousand to fifteen hundred dollars, to say nothing of the loss of crop by having to plant poor seed.

While we were yet seeking far and wide for seed, smarting under the consequences of the broken contract, and fearing that much of that which we were purchasing would never germinate plants at all, while but little of it would produce any thing but sickly stalks; fearing that we were in a measure ruined, but feeling ourselves to be powerless to secure legal redress—in the midst of all this, a bill was presented to us for rent of the house we were living in, made out at the rate of a thousand dollars a year, when, according to our understanding, the outside price was eight hundred dollars.

I pocketed the bill and rode over to the office of the attorney who had sent it with a view of explaining to him my understanding, viz.: that the rent was to be at the rate of a thousand dollars a year (the owner had said eight hundred to a thousand, and I had decided that he would

charge the outside figure)—two hundred to be allowed for repairs; claiming, moreover, that I had already spent a hundred and fifty dollars of this latter amount, while there was much yet to do.

I found the owner of the house at the office of his attorney. He insisted that he had said a thousand dollars a year rent, and that he would *allow* us to put on two hundred dollars' worth of repairs!

I simply said in reply: "I have stated the contract correctly, but let it go; I will pay the bill. I have never had a law-suit, and don't propose to begin now. It is only another charge to our experience account, which," I added, not a little bitterly, "is already a very large one in our new home. We are being welcomed with a vengeance."

The owner's "understanding" was so preposterous, and his attorney saw so clearly that I perfectly understood we were being fleeced, that he said:

"Gentlemen, in view of this unfortunate misunderstanding, I would suggest that you split the difference in dispute, and make the rent nine hundred dollars." I thanked the lawyer for so much relief, paid the account, and departed, a wiser, a poorer, and, if possible, a more intensely disgusted man.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

COTTON PLANTING.

THERE are eras in all enterprises, as in the lives of all individuals. In a railroad enterprise, it is the first or last rail that is spiked down by the president and directors, in the presence of an assembled company, and with much ceremony. In that of a public building, it is the laying of

the corner-stone, which calls together a vast assemblage, with music, guns, speech-making, and a silver trowel in the gloved hand of the "master mason." In that of the steamship, it is when the keel is laid, and again when the vessel glides for the first time into the water. The planting of the cotton-seed might well be regarded as a corresponding era in our Southern plantation enterprise. But to me, as the reader may readily believe, after the long series of obstacles and discouragements of one kind or another recorded in these chapters, its approach was not calculated to suggest occasion for any great display of enthusiasm. It was Mrs. Dobson, who had seen only the rosy side of plantation life, and was therefore filled with its poetry, to whom it occurred that the dropping of the first cotton-seed into the ground should be accompanied with befitting ceremony.

I do not know that the thing was suggested in so many words, but the general idea seemed to be that, if possible, a band of music and a gun would be proper on the occasion—that the music should strike up and the gun should boom simultaneously with the casting of the first seed. Music and a gun, however, were of course out of the question; and, as I had long since had all the poetry of plantation life pressed out of me, under my trying ordeal of getting labor, organizing it, etc., was it any wonder that I had neither any ambition nor heart for display? But there was a melancholy pleasure in knowing that at least one of our party could still enjoy that which was to planting what the last spike in the last rail, or the laying of the corner-stone, were to the enterprises associated with them. It was arranged therefore, that we should all ride up to the plantation in our buggies, and that precisely at half-past one, on the afternoon of April the twentieth, Mrs. Dobson should drop the first seed.

The moment came, and Uncle Wash had every thing ready; but an hour passed by without the Dobsons making

their appearance. Our whole force was organized as a planting squad. They could plant ten acres every hour. The season was very late—we should have been through planting a week ago. Hands and mules became impatient at the delay, and finally Uncle Wash. said, "I declaar I can't wait nary nodder minute; ef dis crap is gwine to be planted, we 'd better git at it, and not wait any longer for foolish doin's."

So I told him to push ahead, and Aunt Martha—she of "de berry large"—instead of Mrs. Dobson, "drapped de fust seed."

Uncle Wash. had about five acres planted when the Dobsons arrived. For once, at least, Dobson had made people wait for him too long, and disappointed his wife in consequence. I felt sorry for her, as she had evidently set her heart upon commemorating this era in our history as cotton-planters.

A week later, Hebron was all planted, and, before the last seed was in the ground, our first afternoon's planting had sprouted, and was showing itself, just peeping through the surface of the ground—a green band on top of the cotton-bed, about three inches wide, and as thick as "de haar on de dog's back," to use Uncle Wash.'s expression.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

COTTON CULTIVATION.

When the cotton-plant first shows itself, it has two round leaves, varying from the size of a nickel to that of a half dollar, according to the richness of the soil, with

a stem like the dandelion's, and about the thickness of a rye-straw. When it has reached a healthy growth, it is "hip-high," and from that to a height which will hide a man on horse-back. In shape, it is not unlike the althea shrub, and their blossoms are also similar. A "stand" of cotton is not less than a hundred little plants to every one which will finally be left to make the last "stand" on which the crop is grown, the ninety-nine being cut away in the various early processes of cultivation, or destroyed by the excessive rains flooding the country and thus drowning them out, or by hailstorms cutting them to pieces, or by unexpectedly late frosts, or by their rusting at the trunk and then rotting away, or by their being eaten by lice—these insects, as well as the rust, being the product of cold rains; and it is to guard against these contingencies that the seed is deposited so thickly, in order that when this little, delicate, sickly plant shall have encountered any or all of its enemies, the mortality can not be so great but that there will be at least stalks enough alive to make the required final "stand" of a single one, from fourteen to twenty-four inches apart. Of course, if the little plant does not encounter all or any of the above-named enemies, as many of the excess as are left standing are finally taken out by the plow and hoe, in process of cultivating. The manner of cultivating cotton is briefly as follows: First, a furrow thrown away from the cotton (the rows are from four to six feet apart), by means of a single cultivating plow—this is called "barring;" second, a plow-like instrument, called a "scraper," follows on either side of the cotton-row, throwing the earth away from it, skimming along the surface, thus scraping away weeds and cotton-plants, leaving only a narrow strip of cotton, from an inch to an inch and a half wide—this is called "scraping," and is an aid to the hoe, doing at least two-thirds of its work; third, then comes the "hoe-gang," "bunching" the cotton—that is, cutting away all the plants, excepting a bunch of from

three to five stalks in a place, each bunch from fourteen to twenty-four inches apart; fourth, the plow again is used, this time throwing the earth towards the cotton—this is called "dirting," and ever after the earth is thrown in the same direction. The hoes again follow the plows, this time cutting away all the stalks save one—this is called bringing cotton to a "final stand." By the successive throwing of furrows toward the cotton, the earth is banked up on either side of it, so that the rows are in shape and size not unlike sweet-potato beds. By this means the moisture is retained in the ground, so that the cotton continues to grow through the long season of drought which it has invariably to encounter. During the excessive rains, earlier in the season, a furrow of earth is sometimes thrown away from the cotton, so as to check its growth, thereby forcing it to produce more fruit. After the first working, which should be commenced as soon as the cotton is well out of the ground, the crop should be worked over with the plow and hoe every ten days, in order to keep the weeds down.

The theory among cotton-planters is that for the first two months the root of the cotton is forming, and that the stalk does not begin to grow until the root has pushed its way down to a depth where it has found hard soil, from the moisture of which it can furnish sustenance to the plant during the coming heat and drouth. Whether this is so or not, I can not say, but it is very certain that, during this time, it is a very feeble, sickly-looking plant, sometimes with the leaf all eaten off, and with nothing but the faintest show of a bud in the center, to tell you the plant is still alive. This apparent sickness continues through all the cold and wet season; but, through it all, there is but one thing for the planter to do—that is, to cultivate thoroughly, keeping the ground well stirred around the plants—and by-and-by the warm days will come, and then these plants, only two inches high, will grow a foot each week, and a fair crop is certain, worm or no worm. On

the contrary, if the cotton-plant is not free from weeds, with soft earth about it, and thus in a favorable condition, when this growing time comes, there is no hope for a crop, and the very best thing for the planter to do, is to plow it up, and raise a crop of sweet-potatoes instead.

The three great enemies to cotton are weeds, water, and worms. The remedy for the first is thorough cultivation; for the second, drainage—add to these two early planting, and you can invariably make a crop of cotton, as much or more than you can gather, before the worm can hurt you. On a plantation so conducted, the worm is a positive service, since he eats off the leaves, and thus exposes the cotton-bolls, which have already matured two-thirds of the way up the stalk (and some of which, but for this, would rot from the continued moisture under the dense leaf-shade), to sunlight and daylight—only cutting off the half-grown bolls at the top of the stalk, most of which the coming frost would never allow to ripen, and which, if it should, you would never have time to gather, as the crop already made will keep you picking from September to February.

I have only to add to the above, in order to give the reader a thorough understanding of the growth of cotton, that it begins to blossom as soon as it begins to grow; that it sends out its limbs just above the surface of the ground, where the blossoms first appear, and it continues to grow and put forth limbs and to blossom, until either the worm or the frost kills it. A cotton-boll is ripe forty-five days after the blossoming, and from the time cotton begins to ripen the crop makes at the rate of a bale a day to each one hundred acres.

The first cotton-bolls to mature are, of course, those on the lower limbs; second, those on the middle limbs; and, last, those on the top limbs—hence the terms "bottom," "middle," and "top" crops; and it is this "top crop" which the worm destroys, leaving the "middle" and "bot-

tom" crops intact, which means at least a bale to the acre—this, of course, where the cultivation, drainage, and early planting have been what they ought to have been; therefore, when you read that the worm has destroyed the crop, this probably means that it has simply destroyed what would have been a "top crop," had it been allowed to make. In former times, when there was no worm to eat off the leaves, the "bottom crop" frequently rotted during the rainy season in August, so that the planter had to rely on his "middle" and "top" crops. Under the worm dispensation, this "bottom crop"—much the most valuable of the three, both in yield and staple—(next in value comes the "middle crop," and lastly the "top crop"), is secured.

The period when the planter seems to be more at leisure than at any other during the entire year, is that immediately after planting, while he is waiting for the cotton to get of sufficient size to commence cultivation. Fatal delusion! That is the most critical time in the whole season. These are golden moments which fix your status during the coming months—as to whether your work is to drive you, or you to drive your work. While the plow and hoe are idle, the weeds and grass are not idle. True, they are just peeping out of the ground now—are no larger than the cotton-plant; but what a week will do in the life of a weed, in this rich soil, with frequent showers to help it along! Just now, the cultivating plow can turn them under from end to end of the rows—a week hence they will be choking it every six feet, wearing out the "hoe-gang," whose only task should be drawing the mellow earth around the cotton-stalks, and not chopping down weeds from three inches to two feet high. The simple lesson in this paragraph cost the South millions of dollars in the year 1866.

That the new-comers should fall into this pit is not a matter of surprise. The surprise is that the old planters

were equally the victims. Filled with the idea that the land had "rested," and was therefore enriched—never for a moment reflecting that their work for the first year or two would be the redemption of a weed-patch, and not the easy cultivation of lands under subjection—the old planter made the same mistake made by the new-comer.

Perhaps our own case would not have been quite so bad, but, about the time Uncle Wash "declaared" our cotton was large enough to commence cultivation, rains set in, which continued with more or less frequency for two weeks. The waters filled up the sloughs in the rear of the cultivated lands, and then backed up into the ditches, overflowing the low places. During all this time, the weeds grew apace. There were half days or days in the intervals of the storm, when our hands could have worked at cultivating the ridges, and between showers all the time. What a service they might have rendered to the half-drowned cotton-plants, by opening choked-up ditches, and thus helping the water to run off! This was what they had to do in the days of slavery, but now "dey was free, and dey would n't work in de mud an' de water for nobody." I tried to reason with them by telling them the cotton-plants were sick; that the hoeing of a single row, even, on a ridge of land, would be so much relief to them; that taking the "trash" out of the ditches was a religious duty. What would they think of a doctor who should refuse to visit them when they were sick, because it had been stormy, and he did n't want to go out in the mud and water? They were the doctors to the sick cotton-plants, and, when called upon, they did n't want to go out and assist in relieving them, I said; and, in this way, we got some few scraps of unwilling service. But here, manifestly, was a serious hitch in cotton-raising under the new dispensation. What was necessary to be done in the days of slavery, was equally necessary now—more so, because of the weed-ridden condition of the plantation, and the

choked-up ditches; and just to the extent that the labor fell short of the old requirements, should we now fail. And so, because we did not begin to cultivate our cotton the very day after we had finished planting the last of it, and because our laborers were unwilling to work in the wet and mud, as they had done in the old times, our crop was in the grass. Of course, we did not despair of getting it clear. No one told us that it was a hopeless task, because all were in the same boat, and no one was willing to acknowledge what must have been apparent to any impartial observer, who had had previous experience in cotton-raising. Then, too, it was just possible, if the weather cleared and the season was late, *and* no army worm came, that we could do something with our crop, even yet. An "if" and two "ands" were the threads on which the success of our scheme hung.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

SMALL-POX—RAIN—NEGRO ECCENTRICITIES—ADJUTANT JOHNSON AND THE DEPARTURE.

THE small-pox was spreading every-where. General Dobson's body-servant had nursed a case of it in the North, and within a couple of weeks he was taken down with the disease. The following week, Mrs. Harding's cook sent her little girl in to tell me, "she is ailing like; will you please, sir, come out, an' see what is de matter wid her." I went out, and found her rolled up, head and all, in a blanket, and I was obliged to punch Jane well, before we could induce her to uncover her head. That told the story, for there were the unmistakable small-pox blotches, and

there sat her two little unvaccinated mulatto children on the floor beside her, munching stale hoe-cake. Jane had been "de mistus of an oberseer, and dese were the chilun" she "done had by him"—one was five and the other three years old, a girl and a boy, and they were bright little things. Our children played with them every day on the gallery, or, when the weather permitted, in the yard. The servants' quarters, where they staid, were several rods from the house, and Dobson gave it as his opinion that there was very little danger of any of us taking the disease, if the children could be kept separate; so we banished Jane's to the servants' quarters, and quarantined our own in the front part of the house. This was only a temporary arrangement, for we at once resolved that the only safe thing to do was to send our families North; but it would take a few days to pack up every thing and close up the house, since we were going to the plantation to live as soon as our families went away. The day after Jane was taken down, Mrs. Dobson's cook was smitten with the disease; and in the evening *her* "chile," a half-grown girl, was likewise smitten. Dobson's body-servant had by this time so far recovered that he was able to act as general nurse, and as fast as the cases came he took them in charge.

Fortunately for all of us, our house and yard servant had already had the small-pox, so he was turned in as cook, proving a fine success in that department.

On the evening of the third day after the outbreak of the disease, I came in from the plantation, when, riding up to the rear gallery, what should I see but Jane's girl and our eldest boy playing together! "Here is a case of varioloid, to a certainty," I exclaimed. The little rascal had escaped the watchful eye of his mother, and thoughtlessly hunted up his mulatto playmate, who was no doubt only too happy to be released from her quarantine.

Many anxious days followed, under the painful apprehension that his exposure had been such as to make it cer-

tain that he would have the varioloid. These were dark days in more ways than one. They were literally dark, for the rain was falling at frequent intervals, and there was mud and water every-where; our families were living in the atmosphere of small-pox, and this fearful contagion might prostrate any one or all of us at any time. I had not minded it so long as it was confined to the plantation—in fact I had daily visited it there for some time, ministering to it, but now that it was at our own door the case was different, and made me tremble with fear when I thought of the exposure of my wife and little ones. There they were—prisoners, as it were, in the midst of the pestilence—for there was no door in this region then which was not doubly barred and bolted against us, and they must needs wait here until our arrangements were made to place them on a steamboat and send them away. Our laborers were very much demoralized from the long rest during the rainy weather; every day some one or more of them were getting drunk, and woman-whipping was a frequent occurrence. I was often called on to quell these women and whisky disturbances. The moral atmosphere was awful—one day a woman would be cohabiting with one man, the next she would have another, "caze she done had a fuss wid him an' quit him." There were desperately jealous men and women among them, and they were constantly keeping up a "'sturbance in de quarta." The best fighters among them were the women, not only with tongue, but with fist and teeth. There were quiet ones—Jimmy and his beautiful Mary, Uncle Wash and his coal-black wife, with Clara and others.

Very objectionable traits of character came to the surface during this trying ordeal of the rainy season. Carrying out our idea of raising our own pork the second year, one of the first things I did on reaching Hebron was to purchase a half dozen hogs with their litters. These pigs had grown to good size now, and every few days we

would miss one of them. They were undoubtedly killed at night in the quarters, and eaten by our own hands. The guilty parties must have been generally known, and yet I could not ferret them out. Our heads of squads—which we had so confidently counted upon to unearth mischief—seemed no wiser than the rest; and even Uncle Wash, who had gained so large a share of our confidence, "could n't, for de life o' him, 'magin' who did it." In my distress, I mentioned the thing to a neighbor. He replied, with a loud laugh:

"There is n't a nigger in your quarters who does n't know about it—they are all in it; but you 'll never catch one of them telling on another; they call that going back on their color."

Was this true? It was hard to feel that while we were feeding them so generously, they should be stealing our hogs, which we could not afford to kill and eat ourselves, because we wanted to fatten them in the winter. If our neighbor was correct in his theory, here was the whole plantation banded against us for the purpose of stealing; and this thought made me feel, more than ever, that we were in the country of our enemies.

Another trait had developed itself, which was particularly annoying just now, since it was the main obstacle in getting our labor out during the intervals of rain. The poorest hands were taken as a standard by the good ones. For instance, if the laborers were late getting out in the morning, and I would speak to them about it, their common reply was: "We 's out jist as soon as" so-and-so (mentioning the most indifferent man in the squad); "we do n't wants to be de fust one in de field." And when the weather would clear, and we would urge them out, their reply would be: "We 's ready to go out ef" so-and-so "will go; but we do n't want to be de onlyest ones to go to de field." The heads, therefore, made their attacks upon the drones, knowing full well that when they went out at

work the rest would follow. The practical effect of all this was to make the lazy ones the ringleaders, and they, and not the industrious ones, made the standard of work. It seemed so much easier to drop to the level of the lazy ones than to drag them up to the height of the industrious ones. It was in vain to reason with them, as they would always say: "We ought n't to be found fault wid long as we 's ready to go to work when de rest do." "Ef de rest 'd work half de night, we 's ready." "Our name 's work." "Work never skeer'd us, but we do n't wants to be at it when de rest aint dar," one after another would exclaim.

Another singular trait was their perfect indifference to their sick. There was a severe case of pneumonia. I tried in vain to get the patient cared for, and for sheer want of attention he died. Then the case was different; the whole plantation stopped work, and turned out to "sing and pray him into hebben," the ceremonies continuing for twenty-four hours.

Every thing was now ready for the departure of our families—they were to start Monday morning; and so on Sunday afternoon we all rode up to the plantation to give the servants who were going away an opportunity to say good-bye. The condition of Adjutant Johnson was worse. It had been evident to me for some time that he was gradually failing, notwithstanding the careful nursing of Clara. I called Dobson's attention to him, and asked him if he did not think he ought to be taken home to his parents.

"Yes."

At my urgent solicitation he took upon himself the task of telling Johnson so, and then old Clara packed his trunk, dropping tears into it along with his shirts and collars, while Billy prepared a conveyance; then we made a chair with our hands, and the invalid, no heavier than a ten-year old boy, sat in it, with an arm over each of our shoulders, and we carried him and placed him in the wagon, and Billy drove off with him amidst the tears and prayers of

his faithful old nurse, who might never see him again on earth, for this time it looked as if he were surely going home to die.

Clara's last wailing exclamation was: "Be good to Jesus, chile; old Clara will meet yer in hebben."

We rode behind the wagon which was conveying our invalid away, and when the negroes in the quarters learned what was going on, which they did from Clara's lamentations, they insisted upon stopping it and bidding him good-bye. The patience shown by him in his suffering had won their hearts completely, and many and hearty were the "God bress yous" spoken, and many were the old shoes thrown after him, "jes fer luck," as the wagon again moved on.

On the way out of the plantation the wagon stopped again, and Billy got down and pulled up some of the largest cotton-plants, and handed them to the invalid. The latter, no doubt, requested him to stop and pluck them as a memento of the plantation, which had at once been a source of joy and sorrow, of comfort and pain to him, and for whose success he had suffered and periled so much.

It was sudden, the suggestion of his going away, and at first he had shown all the self-will and petulance of one stricken with disease. "I wont stir a step," he exclaimed. "It is a plot to get me out of the way." And then this little spirt of temper having thoroughly exhausted him, he sank back, saying:

"I will do whatever you think best. The fact is, I 'm of no account here—perhaps I had better go North during the summer and get some strength for the labors of the picking season in the fall."

When we reached our house, we carried him up on the gallery, as we had carried him from his room in the quarters, he holding on to his cotton-plants until we deposited him in a chair; then he asked Mrs. Harding to please

put them into some water, saying: "I love these plants; there are many ducats at the end of them. How I should like to stay here all summer with you, Mr. Harding, and watch them grow, but no matter; I 'll be back in the fall to lend you a helping hand. I 've rather been in your way, so far, sir, but I 'll make it good to you this fall." Then he added, as if thinking aloud: "How impatient I shall be to get back."

Early on Monday morning, the wagons came down and every thing in the line of edibles, with most of the furniture, was sent up to the plantation on them. The steamboat was expected along at ten in the morning; so the trunks were sent to the wharf-boat, and the buggies brought around to the front door to take our families and the invalid over to the landing as soon as we should see the smoke of the boat coming up the river.

It was arranged that the small-pox cases should be moved at once to the plantation hospital, and, should Jane recover, she was to be our cook. The French negro George, who had been cooking since Jane's sickness, was to accompany Mrs. Harding and the children home, and then, returning, act as my body servant. Dobson was to accompany the family party North as generalissimo.

Before ten o'clock we were all on the front gallery—the ladies bonneted and shawled—ready to push over to the wharf-boat at the first sign of a steamboat.

Under all the circumstances, the separation was a sad one: small-pox on the plantation, and small-pox at our very door; stormy weather; laborers demoralized and showing very objectionable traits of character; cotton in the grass; our prospective home in the overseer's cabin; Adjutant Johnson about to start on, perhaps, his last journey, and, added to these, a thorough consciousness on my part that we were living in a community where we had neither friends nor well-wishers, unless the black people were such.

Twelve o'clock came, and no boat in sight. Our party were getting very impatient, and the invalid looked more than ever hollow-eyed, from having sat up so long. The beds were sent away and there was nothing but the traveling-shawls for him to lie down upon—a hard bed indeed for a sick man. The children were hungry, but there was not so much as a crust of bread in the house for them. The fact is, we had vacated the house, and were just staying on the gallery until the boat came. At one o'clock we dispatched George over to the landing for tidings, it being now three hours overdue. We had yet to learn the lesson which every one living on the Mississippi river must learn sooner or later, viz., when a boat is due at a particular hour, it means that it is due any time within twenty-four hours after; and that the only safe way is not to expect it until it is actually at the landing. George came back with the message:

"Boat past due, sa; dey spect her ebery momint."

Notwithstanding there was no sign of smoke below, and it would take an hour for her to reach the landing after its first appearance, this message was encouragement; it was at least something to be again assured that the boat was expected.

Two o'clock, three o'clock, come and go, but no boat, and all of us are half-starved. A bed has been improvised from shawls and wrappings, where our invalid lies restively. In the morning he had said something about the juicy beef-steak, the cup of coffee with cow's milk, the light bread, and the soft-boiled egg he was going to have as soon as he got on the boat, and it had made the mouths of the rest of the party water, for we had all been strangers to fresh meat, or milk, or eggs, or light bread, for a long time.

The situation was getting serious, and finally Dobson and I sallied out and scoured the town for something to eat. We came back, after an hour's search, with a couple

of boxes of sardines, some crackers, and two bottles of English stout, and our party devoured every thing saving the stout-bottles and the sardine boxes, but it was sorry food for our invalid, and, after he had swallowed a cracker, he turned his face, weary and wan, to the wall, as if worn out with fatigue, but with no bed on which to rest himself—hungry, but with nothing within reach he could eat.

Finally, at nine o'clock in the night, the long-expected boat sounded for the wharf—then, after the hurry to the landing, the hurry to get upon the boat, the hurried good-bye, the last hurried look, and the last hurried hand-pressure from the invalid, my family was steaming up the river, and I was left alone.

CHAPTER XL.

LETTER FROM MRS. HARDING.

"*On the way to Memphis.*

"You can not think how sad I felt to move away on the 'Dan Able,' and leave you behind in that *horrible* place—in the midst of negro small-pox, and among uncivil neighbors. I can not enjoy any thing on this beautiful boat, so sad are my remembrances of the past few days, and you there to endure all by yourself, on and on indefinitely. Oh! will autumn ever come—or shall we ever see each other again? I reproach myself constantly for ever consenting to let you go there. Why could not our picture have been drawn more correctly? What shall I tell our friends in the North, when they ask me how we like our Southern *home?* You may depend upon it, John, I shall not divulge every thing—they shall not know how great is our failure, until we

are *compelled* to confess. I shall stretch my conscience considerably in the coming months, and picture that '*tomb*' we just left as a charming Southern villa. If your life can only be spared to put us up a cabin, *ever so humble*, on the plantation, where the necessity of passing our neighbors' doors may be avoided, then we will come to you and bear all with you. But I fear you'll never see poor Adjutant Johnson again; he was very weary, more so than he would acknowledge, last night, and as a consequence is very low to-day; had a restless night, and, as George expresses it, 'got pow'ful down in de night; tot he'd done an' die, two or free times.' If we get him home it is all we can do. I have given George to him, for he requires constant attention, and I am able to take care of our boys myself.

"*Memphis.*

"We reached here before day this morning, and what do you think?—Adjutant Johnson is up, dressed and sitting out on the guards of the boat! It did not seem, when I retired last night, that he could live until morning. I had the porter make a cot-bed by his stateroom door, and watch his every want during the night. Poor fellow! he dreads the night so, and seems to dislike to be left alone. I wonder if he knows how more than frail he is; I some times think he does, and then, almost before I can think, he will be, as I found him this morning, sitting up, grand as any well man. The boat lies here until to-morrow morning, so I'll write you as things occur during the day, and mail my letter this evening. . . . It is ten o'clock A. M.; every body is preparing to walk up into the city, but I dare not leave Adjutant J., so I have let George take the little boys out for an airing, and we two are sitting in the ladies' cabin. I have fixed him with pillows on a sofa, and he is sleeping sweetly while I am writing. Two nice, stylish-looking young ladies are very sympathetic; have asked me a great many questions con-

cerning 'the sick gentleman,' and have deposited a basket of nice oranges on the table by my side for him. He has just awakened, and I have presented the fruit; he seems so much pleased, and remarked: 'How very kind every body is to me. You are so good, Mrs. Harding, to stay here all day because you fear I shall be lonely. I have some thing I would like you to do for me. I do so much want a Magnolia-bud, and a Cape-gesamine.' I have agreed to run out and try and find some for him, when George comes back. . . . Four o'clock P. M. I have just returned from my search, away down Main street. I found some buds, and delighted was I, too; but when I came on board, George met me and said: 'Adjutant dre'ful bad agin; he is done an' gone to bed.' I hurried to his room and found him prostrate. He smiled as I handed him the flowers and said: 'I love them so much, and I wanted to take them home.' I must wind up my letter, dear John, for indeed I am frightened. How I hope Dr. and Mrs. Dobson will come back soon, for I am afraid to be alone. I shall write you a line to mail from above. Keep up your poor, taxed spirits, and let me go back to you soon as possible.

CHAPTER XLI.

LETTERS FROM MRS. HARDING—DEATH OF ADJUTANT JOHNSON.

"*En route—Still on board 'Dan Able.'*

"It is my desire to mail you one more letter from the boat, so I begin this one, and if it is disconnected and crazy, please attribute the fact to my great anxiety for poor, dear Adjutant J. Such patience, such cheerfulness,

and such submission can only live in the breast of such a man; surely God is with him. George called me in the dead of the night to come quick. I went almost immediately to his state-room and found him rigid and cold. I sent for Dr. Dobson, and to the kitchen of the boat for a mustard-draught, and bottles filled with hot water. The Adjutant's sufferings were intense, but Dr. D. soon administered the needed remedy, and sleep came to his relief. This morning he seems still under the influence of the Doctor's medicine, and as he lies sleeping he looks like death.

"That pleasant Southerner who called on us once, and was so charming, who lives on the Lake near Mr. Jonathan Hampson—Capt. Hurd—came on board at his plantation some fifty miles above us. We find him delightful company. He quite consoles me about you; says you will have a much more endurable summer than I anticipate for you; that you will enjoy the fruits of that country and the fishing, while life on the plantation will be much more pleasant than in the house near the village. Oh! how I wish I could think so. I have no recollection of you there that is very cheering, but I do hope for brighter days on Hebron. The Adjutant is awake, and I must hasten to him, and so will mail this, and write you upon our arrival at our old home."

"*In our own sweet home again, May*, 1866.

"Oh, John, could you but see our lovely home as I see it this morning, I think my happiness would be complete. Our boys are like a pair of fawns; they are so delighted to be where they can jump and kick about with freedom, fearing nothing and enjoying *every thing*. As in contrast with that tomb by the village, it seems Paradise indeed. Talk of the sunny South! why, John, I have seen more sunshine from my standpoint, since our arrival here last evening, than I saw during all my stay in that sunny clime where 'perpetual bloom,' 'kind hospitality,' and any

amount of manly 'chivalry' are reported, and have been so from time immemorial, as the prevailing peculiarities of that country, and which, in our short stay there, we have found so wanting. Could you but sell back to Jonathan Hampson his Hebron, and be content to come back here and 'let well enough alone,' think how we could enjoy ourselves again here among friends reliable in every sense. But I must turn from my bright, lovely picture of an impossibility to one sad, so sad—that of our dying friend, Adjutant Johnson. If he is living this morning I shall be greatly surprised. Poor sufferer! It took us *all* to keep life in him until we could put him tenderly into the arms of his brother at our depot. His family were most of them there to meet him, but they did not expect to see him in so low a condition, and the expressions of anguish on their faces will haunt me. His brother carried him in his arms to their family carriage, oh, so tenderly, and laid him on pillows his sisters had thoughtfully brought for his comfort. I have sent George to inquire for him and offer my services, and I dread his return, through fear of a sad report.

"I did not tell you what happened to me when I went up into Memphis to get those flowers for our dear sick friend. Captain Hurd kindly offered to escort me. The boys also went with us. As we passed the clerk's desk, I noticed two or three horrid-looking men in close proximity, glancing at him with eyes on fire; then we all distinctly heard one of them say: 'D—d Yankee—we'll show him,' etc., and, as we stepped down the stairs, on the front of the boat, we noticed they were following us; and as the Captain preceded me on the gang-plank with our little boy, I looked back just in time to see one of the men take a pistol from his pocket, when, as he was about to fire toward us, a gentleman stepped up behind him, threw his arm holding the weapon into the air, and its contents flashed above our heads. A scuffle ensued between them,

and the companion of the one who had fired the shot shouted at us, 'that 's intended to hit the man who dances attendance upon a set o' Yanks.' I asked the Captain, who stood enraged and flushed with mortification, what it all meant, and his chagrined reply was: 'Indeed, Mrs. Harding, they are not worth minding. I hoped you had not noticed them.' On our way up into town, he told me the parties were people from our county, planters and neighbors of his; that they had been drinking, and were not accountable for what they did. It was very generous in him to think so, but all the same I thought it showed what was in their hearts. It was a very narrow escape for me, for the reason that, being between the two parties and thus shielding Captain Hurd, I should very likely have received the contents of the pistol. I do n't doubt, John, that those horrid Southerners were going to murder that nice man simply because he was showing himself the gentleman to a Northern family. There were two women on board the 'Dan Able,' who 'Yankeed' me all the way up to Louisville. I can not call them ladies, for their actions did not denote that they were ladies. As I passed by them in the cabin, one of them groaned at me, and hissed 'Yankee,' and her companion said, 'Look at her big feet,' and they both drew their dresses away from me, as if afraid of contamination. Can you wonder at my horror of your being in that atmosphere? . . . George has just returned, John, and I can scarcely pen his news. Our gentle, patient, cheerful Adjutant Johnson is no more. Quietly, peacefully, without a murmur, he breathed his last, full of conciousness, before daylight this morning, and George says, "De Cap'n lays dere jes like he was done gone to sleep; an his mudder tel me he nebber let 'em put de 'nolias and flowers you done get for him in Memphis away from him at all; an' dere dey is right by his side, now he is done dead.' Peace to his dear ashes."

CHAPTER XLII.

NEGRO PECULIARITIES.

So FAR as the statistics prove any thing in this respect, no larger percentage of free negroes are thieves than is found among white people. The tendency of slavery, however, was to educate a race of petty thieves. Punishment for theft committed by a slave was corporal, not that which the citizen receives at the hands of the law. Take any class of people the world over, and let theft be punishable simply by lashes laid on the back, and where are the bolts and bars that would keep your property in safety?

The instinct of the slave said: "My master owes me a living; he denies me many things which it is pleasant to have—sometimes, though not often, to the extent of sufficient food; what my appetite craves, or what I may really need, of his, and can get without his knowledge, I will take. If he catches me, I shall be punished, but there is n't much danger of that, as Sambo, Cuffy, Cloe, Dinah, and all the rest will never tell on me. Each has taken things in the same manner and, therefore, all are interested in hiding the act."

This thieving extended only to food, the killing of hogs or beef cattle, or the robbing of hen-roosts, very rarely to the breaking open of meat-houses, and never to burglary in the houses where the "white folks" lived. During our long residence among them, there never has been a night when they could not have come into our house, by simply turning the knob of any one of a half-dozen doors, and yet we have never been disturbed. Our sense of security is so great, that we frequently sleep all night with our doors and windows open—this we did, too, when

they continued to kill our hogs and rob our hen-roosts, until we became discouraged and ceased to keep these animals and fowls. We bought a drove of cattle during the first autumn, which we had to sell out to them finally, in self-defense—only keeping two milch cows, and one of these was "'stroyed" before spring!

It was hard to have our cattle butchered in this way, when we were feeding our laborers so bountifully, and they "declaared it was none ob de Hebron niggers who did it, but de thieving, half-starved niggers on de plantation below." But all the time there was a something about their manner of denial—it was boisterous for one thing—which made us feel that our own negroes were as deep in the mire as their neighbors.

An apologist for the negro might here remark: "Their master fed them on salt meat alone; the human system demands a portion of fresh meat, and, failing to furnish this, they simply took it, just as the horse gnaws at his feed-trough, when his hard-hearted master denies him the salt which his system craves. Of course, this meat-thieving propensity, being bred in the bone, as one of the fruits of slavery, could not be uprooted in a day. In the meantime, those of us employing this recently enfranchised race, must necessarily be the sufferers."

In striking contrast to the universal prevalence of petty food-thieves, was the entire absence of negro beggars. There were really no beggars among the black people of the South. To beg, is a lesson in the march of civilization they have yet to learn! What they have not, and can not buy or steal, they go without.

Their crude idea of marriage was both melancholy and amusing. I have seen negro men marry negro women who had lived in open concubinage with a half-dozen men in as many months. I have seen negro boys not yet twenty, working for from ten to fifteen dollars a month, marry negro women of fifty and upwards, some of them grand-

mothers, with houses full of children, the thought never entering their heads that such marriages were unnatural, or the question how they were to support such broods. But after all, this is not so much a matter of surprise, when we remember that their food and clothes had always been furnished them, and as slaves, such incongruous "takings-up" had been frequent. Then it did not matter whether the woman a man lived with had one or ten children,—the master fed and clothed them all, and the more children, the happier he was; and now that they were free, what was more natural than for them to marry, just as they had previously "taken-up"—not yet realizing that their freedom imposed on them the task of feeding and clothing themselves: certainly not dreaming of the toil and sweat necessary to accomplish that task.

They seemed to think that marriage gave the wife the power to reclaim her runaway husband, and *vice versa*, just as their masters had reclaimed them, when they ran away. The men had the impression that marrying a woman gave them a kind of ownership in her, and that they could flog her at will.

The feeling of "poverty," in the sense of a lack of creature comforts, was yet unknown to them; food and clothing had come to them in a steady and never-failing stream while they were slaves, and of money they had no actual need. What they had longed for, and what they had offered up their rude prayers for, was freedom. This had absorbed all the avarice and covetousness of their natures. Wanting freedom, they felt themselves to be indeed poverty-stricken, and when the wealth of freedom was placed in their hands, they felt themselves to be rich, and what more natural than that they should only come to realize by degrees that this freedom involved the necessity of earning a support? It would only be when this was found to be a difficult task that the feeling of poverty in its usual sense would be realized by them. Then boys of twenty would

not be found marrying women twice or thrice their own age, with great broods of children, and men even, would hesitate before marrying women already thus incumbered.

As for what we call virtue, how could there be any, when during the century of slavery the master had used every effort to so mate his chattels as to secure rapid increase? Restraint there had been, because it accomplished this, not because it tended to morality. The blacks, as slaves, had no moral sense which required a negro woman should be stoned, or even spurned, because this increase came to her outside of wedlock, for there had been no wedlock among them. Indeed, that negro woman who had held an immoral relation to some white man was rather looked upon as a prize by the more ambitious negroes. I have been told by such a negro, with a swelling bosom and sparkling eye, indicating that he considered it something of which to be proud, that his woman had sustained this relation to a prominent white man of the neighborhood.

Slavery made the negro a living deception. In the presence of master or overseer he always wore a mask. In this respect he was a finished diplomat. Address him, and his smiling lips and eyes would say, "yes, sah," while perhaps his heart and brain would be constantly answering, "no, sah." If master or overseer came in wrath, accusing him of killing his hogs or cattle, he would solemnly "declar 'fore God" he was innocent, and even if you should find the meat in his house, he would still "declar it had done been put dar by some of de lazy, triflen niggers to git him into trouble," and then he would call on his dusky wife to testify to his innocence, which testimony was always at hand, ready made, and so strenuous and apparently sincere were these denials, that you began to think there might have been a plot against him, and that, after all, the man has been wrongfully accused. Push the matter a little further, however, and the mask was drop-

ped—there stood before you the injured, innocent man, a thief, by his own confession.

How many thousands of masters, during the late war, were deceived by the constant assertion of their slaves, that they "did n't want freedom," to be undeceived whenever the Union army passed their neighborhood, when even the lame, the halt, and the blind flocked into the camp, to secure the freedom which they had so long prayed for.

The "lazy nigger" is a term which the average Southerner rolls like a sweet morsel under his tongue. You hear it constantly sounded in the hotels, on steamboats,—in short, every-where throughout the South; and yet, in the very nature of things, this reproach can not be just. What! the negro lazy, when slavery had inured him to toil! Men are industrious or lazy from habit. Of tropical origin, a negro has not the enterprise which colder climates engender, but you must look elsewhere to find a lazy people. The slave knew nothing but work; from the diminutive pickaninny to the hoary-headed "uncle," it was work, work. Whatever else there may be laid at his door, certainly it is not laziness.

Finally, the negro in the South is pretty much what slavery made him. He is its human product, and it is, to say the least, bad taste on the part of his late masters, so constantly to be finding fault with him.

CHAPTER XLIII.

NEGRO EXPERIENCES.

An army recuiting station was presently established in our neighborhood, and the negroes went crazy over it.

Within twenty-four hours six of our hands had enlisted, and more were inclined to follow their example. A regiment might have been recruited in a week.

We explained to our laborers that these recruits were wanted for the regular army—not for volunteer service, such as they had experienced; told them of the severity of discipline among regulars; that they would not be allowed to take their women with them; and how they would be sent out to the far West to fight Indians—of the fearful snow storms in that region, and so on.

These statements seemed to dampen their ardor, but it was plain to be seen that many of them were restive to get on their soldier clothes again, and go back to camp-life, even at the risk of all we had described. Then, too, with the negro's natural distrust of statements by white men, they did not believe more than a quarter of our story. A general stampede was imminent. In our dilemma, we appealed to the agent of the Freedmen's Bureau, who gave notice that no one under contract would be allowed to enlist, and so the recruiting officer's occupation was gone, and he soon folded his tents and departed. It was really pleasant, for once, not to hear "tatto" and "reveille," for as often as they were sounded our laborers became uneasy. Evidently, camp-life had more charms for them than plantation-life.

One moonlight night, about midnight, before we went to the plantation to live, Dobson and myself were returning from the wharf-boat, where we had gone to deposit a letter, when whom should we encounter—with a bundle suspended from a stick over his shoulder, looking just as we had seen pictures at the head of advertisements for runaway slaves—but one of our own laborers, running away! We arrested him, and took him into one of the back rooms of our house, and with one of those trace-chains I bought at the government sale in Kentucky we fastened him to the floor. Our wives heard the clanking

of the chains with fear and trembling, not knowing what new danger had crossed our pathway; and the strange sounds, together with our mysterious whisperings, excited their most painful apprehensions. Their nerves had already been strung to their utmost tension by an incident earlier in the evening. A wounded man was brought to the house for Dobson's surgical offices. He was quietly conveyed to the room of Adjutant Johnson, when immediate demands for cloths to make bandages, warm water, etc., had followed, with the usual whisperings in the hall, the walking on tip-toe, the ghost-like silence which broods over a house when a calamity is supposed to have crossed its threshold, all heightened and intensified by the fact that we were living in the midst of constant danger. This had been almost too much for our wives, and now, before they had recovered from this first shock, came the second. It was a night of horror, and the dawn found eyes which had refused to close in sleep red and swollen, and haggard faces.

The next morning we carried our runaway to the plantation, and exhibited him as a striking proof of our unceasing vigilance, and as a solemn warning to others who might be contemplating a similar step. We also reported his case to the agent of the Freedmen's Bureau, who fined him fifteen dollars for the benefit of the schools of the county. (It would have taken something more effective than a search-warrant to have found a school-house.) But, notwithstanding the warning, a week later another negro, becoming jealous of his "'oman," ran away in a passion. We could get no trace of him, and finally gave him up as lost. A month later, however, we heard of a man answering his description, some six miles below on the river, working at a saw-mill. Procuring an order for him from the agent of the Freedman's Bureau, we sent Billy to make the capture, which he did in gallant style, returning in the evening with his trophy, and bearing an insulting message

from the saw-mill man to the Yankee new-comers, asking, if they wanted their runaway, why they did not come for him themselves, and meet with the warm reception which he always had ready for their class.

Some time afterwards, Dobson, meeting a man of the same name, and being introduced, inquired if he was "the saw-mill man." The man answered no, the saw-mill man was his uncle, but he was responsible for any thing the saw-mill man might do or say. This answer was made with a flushed face and a flashing eye, indicating great anger, and was intended to convey to Dobson the idea that he stood ready to take up the saw-mill man's quarrel, if he had one. Thereupon, Dobson, understanding such to be his intimation, struck him with his glove. A fight was imminent on the spot, but friends interfered, and bloodshed was spared for the time being.

Dobson came home, confidently expecting a challenge, and, after deliberation, decided to accept it.

"I am living in a country where the code of honor is in vogue, and although I abominate the practice of dueling, yet I am in Rome and must do as Rome does," said he, and then set to work oiling up a couple of ugly-looking navy sixes, showing plainly that he meant just what he said.

But the challenge never came, and nothing further was ever heard of the affair. But Dobson gained considerable *eclat* among those of the neighborhood who were constantly boasting that they recognized the code of honor, and talking of affairs between gentlemen. He had felt the insulting message sent us by the saw-mill man, and when he supposed he was being introduced to him, he spoke with a sneer the words "saw-mill man," intending to insult him—that, too, when the latter was surrounded by his friends, some half dozen or more, while there were only two in the party Dobson could count on as friends.

It was really our first open difficulty based on sectional feelings, and Dobson sent his man to the wall.

Following close upon the heels of this second capture, three of our laborers were missing one morning. We traced them to a point where they had crossed the Mississippi. We then procured an order for them from the agent of the Freedman's Bureau, had ourselves ferried across the river, and found our runaways chopping cord-wood. By virtue of our order, which, being of national authority, was not limited by State lines, we took into custody in one State the fugitives from another, recrossed the river, and returned with them to the plantation in triumph. The agent of the Bureau imposed a fine on them of twenty-five dollars apiece for school purposes in the county.

One Sunday there was a very severe and brutal case of woman-whipping. We sent for the parties and they came to our office, reeking with blood. It was the inevitable story of adultery. We started Billy to town with the culprit, with orders to take him to the Freedmen's Bureau for investigation and punishment. Billy rode with a pistol in his hand and the offender went on foot before him, but before he had got out of the quarters a conspiracy was organized among some of the negroes, who boldly marched out and took the prisoner away from him. Billy came back crest-fallen.

The situation looked serious. Here was a manifest attempt to excite a riot; but it was best not to act hastily. After deliberation, we decided to report the whole case to the agent of the Freedmen's Bureau the following morning —in the mean time we would not say a word on the subject. This was a wise course to pursue, for the reason that it was different from what the rioters had expected, and our perfect unconcern alarmed them. The next morning the ring-leaders were all arrested by order of the Freedmens' Bureau, and after investigation the agent read the riot act to them, administered a severe lecture, and fined them twenty-five dollars apiece.

Thus we plodded on, such being our difficulties in the

discipline of our force of labor. Manifestly, more than one year must pass before these babes in the role of freedom would become effective free-laborers. So long deprived of their freedom, and having now the crudest ideas of its true meaning, they were mistaking discipline for an attempt to rob them of their priceless treasure.

CHAPTER XLIV.

ANTAGONISM BETWEEN SOLDIERS AND "STAY-AT-HOMES"—THE NEW-COMER THE VICTIM.

THE statement is often made that the soldiers of either army, as a class, having done their fighting during the war, when it was over had no bitterness of heart, but acquiesced in the result frankly and freely, and that those who were talking so loud, and uttering such extreme sentiments on either side, after peace was declared, were those who had never been in the army—the "stay-at-homes," as they were called. Question a Federal or Confederate soldier or officer on the subject, and he would be almost certain to tell you that he had seen quite enough fighting. Question one of the "stay-at-homes," and he would be almost certain to grumble at the results of the war, and want more of it.

The correctness of this statement was forcibly illustrated by two citizens of our county. The soldier's name was Chapman—Capt. Chapman. His record in the Confederate army was unexceptionable. Entering its service at the outbreak of the war as a private, he went up through the different grades of promotion, for bravery on the battle-field and fidelity to every duty in camp, until at the close of the war he held a Captain's commission. He was taken

prisoner in battle and conveyed to Johnson's Island, in Lake Erie, where for months he was confined, until he made his escape one cold winter's night on the ice, in the midst of a blinding snow-storm. His experiences in getting back into the Confederate lines after his escape, poorly clad as he was, encountering for the first time in his life the rigors of a Northern winter, in the country of his enemies, were rough in the extreme, and his escape from detection—his manner, his Southern dialect, and his dress, all making him a marked man—was a marvel. His service dated from the first battle of Manassas until Lee's surrender, and he participated in most of the numberless hard-fought battles between Washington and Richmond. When he returned home, after the muster-out, there was not a blot on his record; on the contrary, his army career was filled with deeds of courage and devotion to the Confederate cause.

So brave and constant in his services to the South, if any one had earned the right to speak for his section, Captain Chapman was certainly that one. And he did speak, not joyously, but soberly and as a war-worn veteran, though still a youth in years, should have spoken.

"The war is over," said he, "and I accept the result." And he spoke so frankly and with so much candor that he was intrusted with the position of agent for the Freedmen's Bureau in the county. He was selected to fill this delicate and onerous position by a Federal army officer who visited the locality—and who, like Captain Chapman, had been through the war, which had taken all the bitterness out of him. When he found this late Confederate officer thus accepting the situation, he conferred upon him this Federal appointment. It was the trust of the late soldier of the victorious army in the soldier of the vanquished army. And it was practical reconstruction.

What should have been more acceptable to the people here than to have the representative of the freedmen taken from their midst, in the person of one of their own brave,

devoted officers? And yet the "stay-at-homes" howled at him, turned up their noses at him, and made him feel very uncomfortable; and the "stay-at-homes" in the North would have condemned the Federal officer, if they had been informed of this appointment. There were brave Confederate officers and soldiers, like Captain Chapman, who could see no harm in his accepting this position, but the "stay-at-homes" were the noisy ones, and at this time the noisy ones made the public sentiment. To have undertaken to controvert them would be charged against the person attempting it as "going back on the South."

And so, while Captain Chapman had courageously stood before the shot and shell of the Federal armies on at least fifty battle-fields, and while other Confederate officers and soldiers in our neighborhood had done likewise, neither he nor they had the courage to face this loudly expressed sentiment, by a public expression to the contrary; and, as a result, he quietly dropped out of this position, where, true to the Southern people as he was, and true to the best interests of the negro as he would have been, he might have rendered such faithful and satisfactory service; and a stranger was brought into the county to do the work instead. Was it not the loud-mouthed "stay-at-homes" who were responsible for the importation of this first carpet-bagger?

Captain Chapman was one of the very few who openly welcomed us to the county. He called on us promptly and without ceremony, and seemed to take solid comfort in the companionship of General Dobson, the two recalling stories of camp-life by the hour. He made a dinner party for us, to which he invited three or four of his own army friends who accepted; and this we had reciprocated, so that a pleasant companionship was growing about us.

In the meantime, the "stay-at-homes" were holding caucuses over what was going on, and they finally determined that it would not do to fraternize with the new-

comers in that way, and again Captain Chapman was singled out as the man who had first committed the overt act. True, they said, General Hampson had promptly called on our wives, with a red rose in his button-hole, but that was simply a state call, and on the same principle that men personally antagonistic to each other frequently have official intercourse;—as he had sold us our plantation, he must go through the forms of an official welcome, which was all he intended in the simple call he had made. It would do, where Southern men either sold or rented to, or went into "pardnership" with the new-comers, for them to make an official show of friendliness, and the Southern merchants would have to be officially friendly to our class in order to get our trade; Southern doctors and lawyers might be allowed to take our practice and be on professional terms with us; but no true Southerner would be allowed to accept any position under the "Yankee government," under penalty of being excommunicated from Southern society, and branded as an enemy of the South. Not that the "stay-at-homes" said all this in so many words, though most of it they did say, but it was a code which they lived up to, with a fidelity not second to their hatred of the class it was aimed at.

Captain Chapman was a lawyer, and there were other lawyers, who had been brave Confederate officers, who secretly did not sympathize with this sentiment, nor act upon it, such as Captains Falconer, De Bar and Whitely, though none of them opposed it openly, and in this way all gave it an indorsement. The "stay-at-homes" raised the red flag, with the cry of "going back on the South," and, with the despotism of public sentiment still ruling them, every Southern man had to appear to come into camp, and our little band of new-comers were left on the outside, to be raided and foraged upon, and made targets, but never to be allowed companionship. We were made to understand, by the public manner toward us, that it was

a great concession for a Southerner to be seen talking with us in an apparently friendly way. Occasionally we would be met in a secluded spot on the levee, as we were riding along, by some one of the small class who, as we fancied, chafed a little under the restraint of this public sentiment against us, but, before speaking to us, we could observe him cast a furtive glance up and down the levee to see if any one was coming. Seeing no one, he would stop and chat pleasantly; but if any body was in sight, he would pass on. Sometimes there was a friendly remark dropped in our ears in a half-frightened manner as we passed through the village, and sometimes there was only a friendly nod or look, but in every case whenever we were treated as we had been treated at home, it was, as a general rule, done by stealth. It was as if we were so many criminals, of whose acquaintance one should be ashamed. As for any one calling upon us, or taking up the cudgels for us, that was out of the question.

Not only the Southern ladies refused to call on our wives, but when they chanced to meet us or them on the public roadway, they would drop their veils, and turn their faces away; and if, by some chance, we got a glimpse of their features, the expression was any thing but complimentary to us. In passing us, along the levee, these Southern women would draw up their riding habits, as if in fear of contamination should Northern and Southern riding skirts come in contact.

It was said that Captain Chapman, with his Confederate army friends, who had dined with us, was sharply criticized by the women—who were, one and all, along with the mischievous boys (the mischievous boys having been, for the most part, "stay-at-homes") the staunch allies of the "stay-at-home" element—for having any thing to do with the hated Yankees, and some went even so far as to cut his acquaintance in consequence. Captain Chapman was full

of mettle, and though seeming to acquiesce, illy brooked this treatment.

The "stay-at-home" leader was Captain Tyler of the wharf-boat. He had, it seems, been a Confederate guerrilla, except for a brief period, when he was a conscript officer. He had never even seen a battle. This man was all the more dangerous, because he had an outward show of liberality. But some of his most lucrative patrons were new-comers, and the code allowed him to appear officially liberal. A coldness grew up between Tyler and Chapman, and, one day, when the latter went down to the wharf-boat, in his official capacity as lawyer, to collect five dollars from Tyler, Tyler disputed the claim. Hot words ensued; the lie was given, and Chapman, who was unarmed, was told to go off and prepare himself. He had got half way up the bank, from the wharf-boat, on his way to do this, when Tyler, who stepped out on the guards, pistol in hand, called out to him, "Look out, there!" and then instantly fired, the ball entering the heart of Chapman, who fell a corpse. And thus tragically ended the career of this brave Confederate officer, who so frankly accepted the situation, and who was able to see far enough into the future to know that immigration here should be treated as it is treated elsewhere, and that such treatment was for the best interest of the South.

Was not this young man a martyr to the cause? For four years he braved the shock of battle, to assist in making the South an independent Confederacy, and now he lay there, in his blood, indirectly a victim to a sentiment which had only the desire to make his section part and parcel of a prosperous nation. Because he was not willing to regard the new-comers as public enemies or convicts: to treat them as if they were gold mines, and therefore to be drilled into with iron pikes, blasted with gunpowder, and ground in quartz mills; or shun them as if they were bearers of pestilence—a quarrel over the paltry

sum of five dollars must end his career. This was a solemn warning to all who contemplated accepting the situation, that they should not do so.

Tyler was arrested, bailed (only think of bail for cold-blooded murder!), and, finally acquitted. A hundred times have I heard that it was said of this victim: "It served him right, for having any thing to do with the Yankee new-comers."

Just about this time another most touching incident occurred. I had, shortly after our arrival, employed a plasterer to repair a cistern at our home near the village, and to plaster some of the cracked and broken walls. He was an Irishman, and had all the blarney of his race at his tongue's end.

"It is a sin and a shame," said he to Mrs. Harding, as he was working away at the walls, "that none of the ladies of the counthry calls on ye; for the loikes of ye I niver saw this side of the ould country." Again, he said, "Ye's must be so lonesome sure, with none o' the people of the counthry callin' on ye's, and yit ye's ivery bit as good as the bist of 'em. And yer husband is a good mon, sure, and wourks so hard—he is a good citizen, and that he is, intirely." And he would plaster and blarney away, whenever Mrs. Harding would pass through the room where he was at work. "Niver mind, me good lady," he exclaimed another day, "I'll bring Mrs. Birch an' me daaters to call on ye next Sunday. It's too bad intirely for the loikes of ye to be pinin' for the wants of conjanial society when I can give it to ye. Nather Mrs. Birch nor me daaters are proud, and we'd niver be ashamed to call on the loikes of ye, aven though none of the rist of the ladies of the counthry come to see ye."

Mrs. Harding thought his talk all blarney; but not so, for the next Sunday all came, in their sun-bonnets, check aprons, calico dresses, and with their hearts in their mouths. Mr. Birch marshaled the party. It was none of

your fashionable calls of three minutes, but a good, solid hour's sitting, with a world of heart and good intentions in it, and with plenty of Irish talk, not necessary to repeat here. Mrs. Harding passed around the doughnuts, apples, and wine with a will. Not that she was really pining for society—but it was something at which to be gratified, that there was one family, at least, even though it was simply that of a plasterer, who did not shun us as if we were mad dogs. It was a tribute, on the part of this kind-hearted Irishman and his kind-hearted family, to what they conceived to be our loneliness. And there was daring in it, too, because this man had to draw his support from these fiery and prejudiced Southerners, and when himself and family came and called on Mrs. Harding, that beautiful Sunday, they virtually arrayed the sentiment of the country against them. It was as if they had taken sides with the new-comers. And shortly after that, whether it resulted from this call or not I can not say, the sister of the wharf-boatman, Tyler, who was a teacher, was said to have whipped one of the Misses Birch, who was one of her pupils, unmercifully. Her brothers, a pair of courageous boys, took exception to it, and boldly went to the wharf-boat, to face Captain Tyler, who had taken up his sister's quarrel, if he was not its instigator.

In the *melee* which followed, Tyler got a discharge of buckshot in his groin, from a gun in the hands of one of the Birches, from which he narrowly escaped with his life, and which left him a cripple for the rest of his days.

Need I say that this Sunday call touched a chord in our feelings which has never ceased to vibrate, as often as we think of it. And while speaking of this Irish plasterer and his family, I wish to bear tribute to the fact that the entire Irish element, a considerable one in our little village —most of whom dated their residence here from before the war, and were brave soldiers in the Confederate army—al-

ways treated us well, and they showed more courage in braving the public sentiment we are describing than any other class.

CHAPTER XLV.

LIEUTENANT BLAIR, U. S. A.

One morning, shortly after our arrival, while we were at breakfast, the unusual sound of a knock was heard at our front door, and George came back with the still more unusual announcement that a white "gen'man" wanted to see Mr. Harding, but said, "Tell him I 'm in no hurry; to finish his breakfast at his leisure, and if convenient for him to see me afterward, I will be glad."

With this announcement, George laid at my plate a neatly engraved card, which bore in Roman letters the name of "Lieutenant Blair, U. S. A." Not willing to let a representative of the army wait on me a moment, I at once went to my office sitting-room, into which George had shown him, to welcome the stranger under our roof, and to invite him to join us at our morning meal, as the hour was so early I felt all but certain he had not yet taken breakfast.

A young man rose from his seat, and stepped forward to meet me, saying: "I suppose I have the pleasure of addressing John Harding?"

I replied: "Yes. Will you not join us at breakfast?"

"Thank you, sir," he said, "I will be glad to do so. I got off at the wharf-boat in the night, and have been sitting there ever since, waiting for daylight to come; and though Tyler urged me to stay for breakfast, I declined, as I felt quite certain of a welcome here, and thought more than likely I should stumble on you at your morning meal, when

I intended to make bold and invite myself—if it did not occur to you to do so," he added, laughing,—"but it did occur, and I am quite ready to join you at once."

And so we went out to the breakfast room, where, after introduction to Mrs. Harding and Adjutant Johnson, Lieutenant Blair was placed in the seat of honor.

The new-comer was in figure spare—his weight being about one hundred and twenty pounds—and six feet in height. His eyes were his striking feature; sometimes they were grey, sometimes hazel, and then they would appear dark enough to be called black, but whichever hue they assumed, their language was almost as readily understood as his uttered words: fidelity, sincerity, enthusiasm, honesty, and true goodness were mirrored in them, with perhaps a preponderance of enthusiasm. All his features were good. The rims of his ears, even, stood well out from his head, as if bent on catching the slightest sound, and his nose came sharply to a point, as if it were made to force its owner through the world, while the nostrils ever and anon distended, as if on the scent for the main chance. The veins showed themselves on the back of his hands, as large as good-sized cording—across his temples also, where they were delicate threads; and in both cases very blue; and over his pure, white forehead, they were strongly defined. There were good, stout, sinewy chords running down the back of his neck, which was slender and long, and the way he carried his head showed that there was no lack of communication between that and his heart. Applying these horse-tests to him, there was shown to be gentle blood in his veins. He bore his part in the conversation in that easy, off-hand manner, which camp and army experience gives one, and at the same time, shut out from woman kind, as the soldier is, with something of bashfulness resulting from that fact,—as he told me afterward, that he had seen absolutely nothing of female society in his four years of army-life, and the very sight

of a woman made him tremble. Altogether he was a "taking" fellow.

Breakfast over, and back in my office sitting-room, he opened his satchel, and took from it a bundle of newspapers, which he handed me, saying, "There are some New York and New Orleans papers. I thought it would n't come amiss to bring them off the steamboat for you; I fancy you do n't get the newspapers every day, and no person but one like you, who has always been used to them, knows what it is to be deprived of them."

I thanked him for his thoughtfulness, and handed him a cigar.

"I am obliged to you, sir," he said; "I never smoked a cigar, or chewed a quid of tobacco, or drank a drop of any kind of liquor in my life, except medicinally." And then he told me his story.

"I am from New Jersey; my mother and two sisters are all who are left of a family of seven in the old home there. When the war came on, I was a student at Yale, twenty years of age; my future, the ministry. Young as I was, I could not see my country in danger without assisting in its rescue; and so I went into the army as a private, and was only mustered out the other day in New Orleans, with the rank of first Lieutenant. Towards the close of the war, I was on the staff of Gen. Jarvis, in whose brigade was a negro regiment, which was recruited in the South—and from among the late slaves. That regiment was mustered out at the same time I was, which brings me to the subject nearest my heart, Mr. Harding. I am in love with this country, and am fully determined to be a cotton-planter. In the way of money I have about three hundred and fifty dollars, saved in the army, which is, of course, too little to enable me to rent and stock a whole plantation. All I can hope to do this year, is to get some sort of a foot-hold. I have dedicated my life to this pursuit, and do not intend to allow any obstacle to turn me aside. I have

secured from the negro regiment which was mustered out when I was, some forty choice hands, who are now on the sugar-coast waiting for me to find a location, when I am to go and fetch them. I have walked part of the way from New Orleans, the better to see the country. I thought may be you might need more laborers than you have, and in consideration of my bringing mine, and putting them on your plantation, you would find it to your interest to employ me as assistant manager, besides renting me fifty acres which I could cultivate with four or five of the hands from my force of forty, using my three hundred and fifty dollars and the salary you might be willing to pay me to help make my crop—you to advance whatever sum I might be short, taking your pay out of the cotton I would raise."

I told him we were just then short of laborers, but that I had written Gen. Dobson, my partner, to bring us more; these I expected shortly to receive, when we would have a full supply, otherwise I should be glad to make some arrangement with him.

Our guest was much disappointed at my reply; but he said, courageously, and with enthusiasm shooting from his eyes, "I shall expect to meet many obstacles, but I am firmly resolved to meet them with fortitude, and to overcome them. I know I shall succeed," he continued, as if thinking aloud; "I have been out the best part of a month now, and without finding an opening; but I shall find one if I persevere, and persevere I will, for sooner than surrender this passion of mine," he said with a glow, "I will hire myself out as a day-laborer on some plantation, and so start from the lowest round. I am willing to give five years of my life, if necessary, to get a foot-hold here—yes, twenty years," he added, as if taking a second thought. "My mother and sisters, whom I haven't seen since entering the service, now nearly four years, implore me to come

home, but their letters do not move me in the least from the accomplishment of my purpose."

"Are you so fond of money," I inquired, "that you are ready to hazard and endure so much?"

"Of course," he replied, "money is the main thing, though it is not all: here is work that is to be done in bringing up the freedmen to a standard of usefulness, helping them to find the right road in their journey as free men, and the development of this country under the new dispensation. I feel that the work of the war is only half done, and as if I should n't be blessed if I leave this country now. I firmly believe there is no part of the country where there is such a future for young men as this. I have my own fortune to make, and right here I intend to make it."

Never have I seen such enthusiasm as this young man evinced, unless in the case of Adjutant Johnson, though in this instance there was the closely-knit, sinewy frame, with no disease gnawing, canker-like, at the vitals. So far as health went, he seemed to be able to encounter all the future might have in store for him, in this rough country. In looking at this young hero as he sat there all on fire with his subject, it made me hope that there would be no such word as fail in his case.

I urged him to spend a day or two with us, but he declined with thanks, saying: "There is no time to be lost; the season is advancing, and I must get located some where. I have been out so long now that I fear my laborers will get uneasy at not hearing from me. Can you recommend me to any planter here, where I would be likely to make an arrangement like the one I have just proposed to you? I like the first glance at your county very much," and he was pleased to add, "I should like to plant myself near you."

"No," I said, "I know of no place; the fact is, I am kept so close at my work that I know absolutely nothing of our neighbors' wants, but every body is needing labor, and I

should think you might get a foot-hold, by virtue of the labor you say you control, almost any where." He replied, after a few moments thought: "I will go on up the river a little further, and then, if I can not find any place, I will cross over and so follow on down on the other side."

I offered to loan him a mule to ride a few miles on his way, but he said he would much prefer to walk, and so, after a "good morning," and a promise to write after he got settled, with his satchel on a cotton-wood stick slung over his shoulder, he trudged off, as many another poor young man had trudged along who afterward came to be a millionaire. I must have looked a little sadly at him as he started to move off with his long soldier stride—telling its story of years of experience in marching, for he called out:

"Do not fear for me, Mr. Harding; there is no such word as fail in my composition. I came out of the war right-side up, and, God blessing me," he said, reverently, "I shall prosper now," and so he passed out of sight. Surely there was good material here, I thought, that could go into the army at twenty, and come out of it at the end of four years without having smoked a cigar, taken a quid of tobacco, or a dram of liquor. It is the boys, who, going out into the world, can withstand temptation, as he has withstood it, in the trying ordeal of army experience, who make the successful men. Judging from the glimpse I had of him, I should say, that what would be temptation to many boys and young men, was no temptation to him. When I offered him a cigar, he told of his record in such a way as to plainly indicate that his principles were fixed in these respects, and he wanted me to understand this to be so at the outset of our acquaintance, so that never in the future, if we were to be thrown together, would I be called upon to extend to him a similar invitation.

It was more than a week before I could get Lieut. Blair out of my mind. As for Mrs. Harding, the children, and

Adjutant Johnson, they could never stop talking about the great enthusiasm of this young man, with only three hundred and fifty dollars in money, and a party of freedmen waiting down on the sugar-coast for him to find them a home—he expecting to thrive through them, and they through him. But the cares of our plantation in time drove the episode out of my thoughts. It was all revived, however, during my Vicksburg trip for labor, for whom should I find at the hotel but Lieut. Blair? He was overjoyed at meeting me.

He said: "I went a considerable way up the river, and there got a freedman to ferry me across in a skiff, and came down the river again, finally returning here, and so making the journey on foot."

I noticed him closely as he was telling me this, to see if I could not discover that his ardor had cooled; but no, there was not the slightest abatement. As if divining my look, he exclaimed: "Never fear; I shall succeed. I am now negotiating with several planters here, who want me to come to them with my labor, and who offer me a fine chance. But I would so much like to get into your neighborhood. What I am afraid of is, not knowing the planters or being able to have them vouched for, I may make a bad selection. Will you not advise me on this subject?"

Among the army of planters there in search of labor, was a representative from General Hampson's Hambleton plantation, in the person of the owner of the house we were living in. It seems that General Hampson's wealth was, like that of most people here, fictitious; that while he held the title to Hebron and Hambleton, as well as one or two other places, none of them were paid for in full; that the Hebron plantation was largely involved, but he had cleared our title to it, by the use of part of our notes, which his creditors took in lieu of his, netting him a handsome profit in the way of discount; that he had satisfied the creditors against Hambleton by agreeing to divide it equally,

setting off to them one half. Our village landlord represented the estate to which this was to go, and came to procure labor for it. The actual division of Hambleton had not yet taken place, so that General Hampson was yet in immediate command, with an old-time overseer under him.

Barber, the Hambleton representative, was having no luck at Vicksburg in securing labor, and was likely to have to return without any recruits. He was not able to get down among the negroes like many of the other planters. His manner was rather that of the bank president, who knows he has customers for every dollar he has to loan, and that they will come to him and ask him for it, and so never solicits, when it should have been that of the book-peddler or the life-insurance agent, who knows that he must work, talk, and solicit a great deal to secure customers.

It occurred to me that Lieutenant Blair might make a satisfactory arrangement with the Hambleton owners, and I suggested as much to him.

"Just what I should like to do!" he cried, "then I can be in your splendid country and near you. Will you not introduce me to Mr. Barber?"

"Certainly," I replied, and that afternoon I brought them together. Barber thought there was no sort of question but that General Hampson would be only too delighted to make an arrangement with Lieutenant Blair similar to the one he proposed to make with us, which Blair, at my request, repeated to Barber, and the latter importuned him to proceed with him by the first steamboat to Hambleton, and close the bargain, so that he might hurry away and fetch his labor—all of which was in due time consummated; and so Lieutenant Blair was located on the Hambleton plantation in a room in the overseer's cabin, and though the roof which covered him, and the walls that shut him in, were the rudest, he was yet very happy, in the thought that after his long wandering, he was at last apparently so satisfactorily situated. He furnished his own little room com-

fortably from his slender purse, and was allowed to purchase such articles of food not furnished for the overseer's table as his appetite demanded. The terms of his contract did not require this outlay by him, as by it he was to be bedded and boarded by the plantation, but there was something said about the outlay being refunded to him in the fall; and so, not at all particular or exacting, or expecting any sharp dealing, he did not complain.

"I want a comfortable bed," he said, "and wholesome food, and I don't mind a little extra outlay to procure them, as these are my only luxuries." It seemed like a rare chance for our new-found friend, and I felt glad over the thought that I had been able to serve him in a small way, and he was very grateful to me. The overseer was an experienced planter, and under him Blair could learn all the details of the cotton-field, and thus become a practical planter, which was precisely what he was seeking for. His zeal to assist the overseer, was only equal to his enthusiasm for his new calling, so that he was up early and late, and always in the field where the negroes were at work.

CHAPTER XLVI.

OUR HOME IN THE OVERSEER'S CABIN.

After saying good-bye to our party on the steamer "Dan Able," I mounted my horse, and, in company with Billy and the conveyances which took our families to the wharf-boat, hurried away from the landing. I knew it to be unsafe to be out at such an unseasonable hour, but the delay of the boat made it unavoidable. The lights were streaming from the open doors of the saloons, which

were all well filled with parties drinking and playing cards, no doubt for the most part "the mischievous boys," yet none of them appeared to be on the "rampage," perhaps because it was so early in the evening, and so we went through the village unmolested. We took the levee road, passing by our dark and deserted home, which looked dreary enough with the gloom of night about it.

Wishing to be alone with my sad thoughts, I put my horse into a slow gallop, left the rest of our party in the rear, and so caught up with the steamboat, which was carrying my treasures up the river so fast, and kept up with her, until I turned in at our plantation gate; or, rather, to be perfectly accurate, I followed her half a mile further up the river, with the desperate feeling that I could not let her pass out of my sight, or be left behind here, in the midst of this contagion and unfriendly sentiment. But my panting horse warned me that I had gone far enough, and so, with a heavy heart, I turned back. There, out on the water, was the object of my present passion, moving steadily and with majesty up the river, looking, with its myriad of lights, just like a city in the distance at night.

I suffered the reins to drop on the neck of my tired animal, resolved to keep my dreary watch there until the boat swept around the bend, and so passed out of sight. Just then the coal-heavers threw wide open the furnace-doors, to replenish them. At first the throats thus exposed looked like molten masses of fire, shining from the front of the boat, and out upon the water, but the next instant, as the fireman stirred up the furnaces, great billowing flames streamed out, and I involuntarily exclaimed, "The boat is on fire!" But, of course, it was nothing of the kind—only the blaze from the furnaces. Then sparks and smoke rolled out from the chimneys in two great coils, the sparks veiled in the smoke looking like stars overcast by fast-flying clouds. The volume of sparks went twinkling in a long, bright band far behind the boat, hanging

low over it and the water, because of the rain-saturated atmosphere of the region.

After the boat had passed a mile away, I sat there brooding on my horse and remembered the story Mrs. Harding had once told me, of a cousin in the West, who was so homesick for his parents, then visiting in Vermont, that he got out on the fence one evening, and called for them at the top of his voice. I could now sympathize with the boy as heartily as I had often laughed at him, for here was I, a strong man, and I could hardly resist the temptation to call to the boat to come back and take me away from this desolate country forever—take me back to my pill-shop, where no Dobson should tempt me again; to my pill-shop, where, instead of sherry, I would have aqua-fortis, as a welcome for all bearers of Dobson estimates.

Two miles off, the puffing of the steamer was no longer heard; there were no sparks flying from the chimneys, and instead of the steady movement of a distinct steamboat, full of life, all that could be seen were the lights, away off on the water—carried along with an uncertain motion. One instant they would appear stationary, the next they would dart ahead. Finally, that which, with this stop-and-go motion, no longer seemed a steamboat, but a specter, was gradually jerked out of sight, around the bend of the river above.

I went slowly back until I was brought up at the overseer's cabin, when our prospective home there became, for me, a reality. The overseer's cabin was a building eighteen feet by thirty-two, single story, with an eight foot gallery running down one side, a double chimney in the center of the building, and a board partition extending on either side of it, thus making two rooms, of equal size, about sixteen feet square. One room served as our plantation store, office, etc., the other was prepared for Dobson and myself. It was at once our sleeping, sitting, and dining-room; in short, it was all the room we had. Old Clara

and the beautiful Mary, who was to serve as our cook until Jane's recovery, had fitted up the room for our reception. It is astonishing how many things can be stowed in a single room:—there were two double beds in opposite corners; a wardrobe in another corner; a writing-desk in the remaining corner; our trunks, two of them; a bureau; a wash-stand; a table in the center, for all purposes, which, fortunately for our space, was an extension one, capable of seating for a meal fourteen persons, or contracted for but four; then there were two common chairs, and two rocking-chairs—these and a lounge made up the principal items of furniture, etc., on the floor of the room.

The dogs howled fearfully the first night. I got up several times and went to the door to try and quiet them, and I felt the discomforts of the jam in which I had taken up my abode, through the rappings I got on my shins while floundering about in the dark—which showed black and blue marks the next day. The shoulder of the chimney, on which the throat rested, served as a mantle-piece, where was placed our little French clock, with two coal-oil lamps. The outfit for house-keeping was quite complete. I have already enumerated a portion of the articles; those which I have not named, could have been seen hanging around on the walls, which were profusely covered with them—coats, sauce-pans, hats, tin-cups, saddle and bridle, and a medley of incongruous articles, too numerous to mention. We did, however, have a second room, in the shape of a little space boarded in on one corner of the gallery, where our cooking stove was mounted. This "shed" served the purpose of china-closet, pantry, store-room, and kitchen. Manifestly, our outfit was too extensive for our dwelling. We could have done quite well, and had plenty of room, with a simple camp outfit, or with such an outfit as in the primitive days early settlers in the West began life with; but here we had too much mahogany, too many append-

ages of fashion. The dressing of our room was not at all in keeping with the room itself, though if we had been called upon to part with any single article, we could not have made a choice, so necessary did they all seem.

In the romantic stage of our plantation experience, I would, doubtless, have called it snug and cosy, but the romance was now worn off, and I felt desperately blue at being left thus alone, so I had something to say to Billy about the whole thing being a perfect clutter, and how this was a pig-pen existence. I stumbled about among the furniture at my first morning toilet, and when some article got in my way, as happened constantly, I kicked out at it viciously, as though it had feeling. If I had allowed myself, I could easily have felt a fearful disgust—indeed, I felt the disgust already, but endeavored not to acknowledge it.

Only across the yard, not three rods away, was the cabin used as a hospital, where there were four small-pox cases, and I was their only doctor. It takes more philosophy than I possessed, in the mood I was then in, to consider the atmosphere of small-pox cheerful. But I made a powerful effort to look on the bright side of the situation, or to look where I thought it should be (the fact is, there was no bright side), and thus I regained some sort of equilibrium. It would never do to break down, now that I was left alone with the pestilence, and this weight of duty upon me.

Billy came in to say that "two of the small-pox patients were out of their head last night, and got away from the hospital, and the nurse chased them for over an hour, finally catching them at the gin-house. They are now back in the hospital with a raging fever on them, and want attention badly." It was not half a minute's walk to the hospital, and so, while my breakfast was preparing, I went over to see what could be done for the runaway patients. They were full-blooded negroes, and their faces were

blotched and swollen to such an extent, that each made me think of a dead-ripe blackberry, with here and there the skin broken, showing the seed, and a little bead of red juice. There they lay, burning with fever, and crazy as loons. There did not appear to be a chance for them, but I gave our sufferers the benefit of my best druggist knowledge, and left them, with a severe reprimand to the nurse for letting them get away.

When I returned from my visit to the hospital, I found Clara building a fire in our fire-place, and Mary standing over her with a troubled expression on her beautiful face, which was disfigured by several spots of smut. There were vessels of half-cooked food standing about on the hearth, and my glance in the kitchen as I came along, so far as I could see through the cloud of smoke, showed that there was not a lid on the stove, and that the smoke and blaze were pouring out from every hole.

"What in the world is the matter!" I exclaimed.

Clara looked up from blowing the fire, with her wet eyes, and replied, "Mr. Harding, dat iron trick in dar is no sort o' 'count for a nigger's cooking in dis country; it may do up Norf—but it 'll nebber do down heer. Mary an' me is bin tryin' to git de grub ready for ye for de las' half hour, an' it has pintedly don' smoked our eyes out."

"Have you never cooked on a stove?"

Both replied, "We 's nebber seed dat kind o' trick afore."

Both Mary's beautiful hands, and Clara's horny ones, showed numerous blisters. Seeing us look at their hands Clara said, holding up hers:

"We done got dese blisters tryin' to stop up de pesky holes in dat trick. Cookin' on de fire-place 's easy nuff, any chile kin larn dat; de fire-place jes speaks for itself, it allus stands wide open," she continued, eyeing it with evident admiration, "and says, 'jes prepaar fire in me, and

put on de pots an' skillets wid de truck in um, an' I 'll do de res.' " Looking toward the kitchen from which the smoke was streaming, and rubbing her eyes as if in recollection of the dose they had just received, she said, with marked disgust, " dat iron fixin' out dar 'll nebber do for de likes o' us niggers, we 's too done sot in our ways pintedly."

Mary said, looking at her blistered hands with her red eyes, on the lashes of which shone moisture from their recent weeping, " I mout learn in time, sir, ef some one 'ud show me, but I 'd rether cook out in the yard, ef you have no objections, until I do learn." Her fresh, clean dress and neatly ruffled bib-apron were all smutted up, as was Clara's gown, and they both showed distinct marks of having had a tussle " wid dat iron trick," as Clara called the stove.

"It never rains but it pours," so here was an extra duty before me, and one not at all congenial or in my line—that of teaching the cook how to use the stove. The first discovery made, when the smoke cleared away enough to let us into the kitchen, was that the lids of the stove were not unpacked ; Mary built the fire in it with the lids wide open, and tried to stop them up by piling sticks of wood over them; then, without knowing that each kettle had its appropriate hole, she got the large kettles on the small holes, and vice versa. In her distress, she had called in Clara to help her out, but Clara was no wiser than she, so they gave the stove up and moved into our bed-room.

It was a wonder they did not burn the cabin down in their morning's bungling. I gave them permission to go on and finish the breakfast in the fire-place, and so for the first meal our single room performed the additional office of kitchen ; but, like every thing else, it had its capacity, and as there was not space enough left after the storing of the furniture for two cooks and myself, at one time, I

went into the store while the meal was being prepared, after which Clara vacated and left me room to return and eat it.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

LISS AND SAM.

One morning, after breakfast, I was sitting at my desk, writing up my books, and smoking a cigar, when I heard a knock at the store door. I called out, "Come in."

The door slowly opened, and the face of a negro man wearing the saddest expression imaginable, and with his woolly head wrapped with a fiery-striped bandana handkerchief, peered in.

"Did yer say, come in?" he drawled out. "Yes," I answered, "come in, and shut the door after you." Slowly my order was obeyed—then my caller dropped a faded and torn army cap on the floor at his side, caught at what would have been his forelock of wool, if the handkerchief had not hid it, pulled his head slightly forward, and at the same instant scraped back with his right brogan, and drawled out deliberately:

"I wish ye good mornin', sah."

I recognized him as one of our Vicksburg negroes. "What is your name?"

"Sam."

"Are you sick, or what 's the matter? You look as if you had n't a friend in the world."

"I 's not what yer mout say so much sick wid my body as I am torn up in my mind. I 's pow'fully riled dar. Yer see, I tuck up wid Liss, when we comed from Vicksburg. Liss an' me got 'long right pertly till de udder night, when

all of a sudden she seemed sot agin me. I come to see yer dis mornin', to see ef yer hadn't some truck I could give her, so 's to sot her back in her lub to me agin, or ef yer had n't dat, ef yer would'nt jes force her back to do de fa'r thing by me, an' stop her runnin' through de quarters nights."

"Where is Liss?" I asked.

"She 's out in de fiel' 't work."

"Well, you bring her up here this evening at seven o'clock, and we 'll see what can be done. I do n't happen to have any 'truck' about me that you could give her to bring her back, but we 'll see what a little talk will do."

At seven in the evening Sam and Liss came around, Sam repeating his operations of the morning in the knocking and bowing line; but Liss stood up without a look or word of recognition, which led me to believe that she was not a willing party to the interview now on hand.

Liss was a wild-looking wench; she had a dare-devil flash of the eye, and every mark of being perfectly untamed; like a child's, her under lip stuck out a half an inch, and there seemed any quantity of pout in her. She looked at me viciously, out of the corners of her eyes, just as an angry horse will look when about to send his heels against the dash-board. I could not think of any thing but a high-mettled animal when I saw her. She was well fed, her face was glossy, and her whole person was glowing with health and high spirits. I almost expected her to kick out and squeal like a vicious mare.

Sam was as solemn as an owl. "Liss," said he, "dis is Mr. Harding. I aint arter takin' any unfa'r advantage of ye, so I wants yer to tell yer own side of de story, an' I 'll tell mine, an' we 'll let him 'cide twixt us."

I looked at Liss, but the only answer on her part was a sullen shake of the skirt of her frock, and a quarter of an inch more pout on her lip.

"Go ahead, Liss," Sam said.

"I 's got nuffin to say," was all Sam could get out of her.

I urged her to tell her story, but to no purpose; so I said: "Sam, tell us your side of the case." And Sam squared around deliberately for the work before him. He held out his left hand before him, shaping it like a cup, as if the whole story was in its hollow; then he hooked the first finger of his right hand, and put it in this hollow, as if to pull out the facts as they occurred to him. Thus prepared, with his head on one side, and all the manner of a person bent on being scrupulously exact as to facts, he commenced:

"Dis is Friday, yisterday was Fursday, an' de day afore was Tschuesday;—yes, dat 's right," he said, hesitatingly, and as if in a little doubt as to whether the fore-finger of his right hand had hooked out the right day from the hollow of his left hand; but, finally, deciding that it had done so, he continued, "Yes, it war Tschuesday night—Liss an' me war sittin' on de steps ob our gallery, when, jis as a husband 'll do sometimes, I put my arm around her waist, an' she tole me to take it away, and so I tuck it away; but after awhile I puts it back agin, an' she tole me to take it away agin, so I tucked it away agin. By 'n by I puts it back agin, an' she tole me to take it away agin. This made me stubborn like, and I luff it dar; she tole me ef I did n't take it away, she'd knock it away, an' I luff it dar to see ef she 'uld—an', shore nuff, she knocked it away, an' dat night she would n't get into bed, but slept on de floor, an' ebber since she's kep away from me, an's been sleepin' out o' nights anywhar."

Sam dropped his right-hand finger, and let his left hand fall at his side, thus indicating that he had nothing more to say.

I looked at Liss and asked: "Is all this true?"

She grunted out some monosyllable, which might have been a "yes," or it might have been an exclamation of surprise at Sam's story, and then shoved out her lips another quarter of an inch, and stood there with her knuck-

les resting on her hips, her feet sprawled out far enough to let a spring lamb pass between them, without rubbing, stomach and breast thrown well to the front, head back, nostrils and eyes shooting and breathing defiance, her ears close to her head just like a stubborn mule's. I waited a moment for Liss to continue, but she had done. It was n't Liss's words which told the thoughts within her; her person and manner told them distinctly enough;—there was no tamed colt here, and manifestly the slow-going, deliberate Sam had no business to be hitched up along side of her, any more than a poky dray-horse by the side of a brisk, jumping, balking, fiery mustang pony.

I considered a moment what advice I had best give; knowing pretty well that the untamed wench at my side would not heed me in the least, but feeling that I must make an effort for Sam's sake, as my sympathy rested with him, although I could not help admiring his "tuck-up" woman, who was now kicking in the traces and looking defiance. Meanwhile, I said:

"Sam, if you have done any thing to Liss, which you ought not, are you sorry for it and willing to ask her forgiveness?"

"Yes, sah."

"Will you do so now?"

"Yes, sah."

"Well, go ahead."

"Liss, ef I's done de wrong part by ye, I axes yer pardon, an' ef ye leave dat low-down nigger ye's runnin' arter, an' come back to me, I'll 'low ye to take de whole ob Saturday to do yer washin' in."

Sam said this with more life than I had supposed there was in him, and then he looked anxiously and inquiringly at Liss, to see whether she was softened.

"Liss," I said, "if you have done any thing you ought not to have done, are you sorry for it, and are you willing to ask Sam's forgiveness now?"

"No!" she screamed out, as if this was too much for her pent-up feelings, "Sam's a lazy, low-down, triflin' nigger, an' I 'll scratch his eyes plum out, if he comes pesterin' me any more. I don't 'long to him; we was nebber married out ob de book, and den for him to be talkin' so 'bout de 'spectable nigger I's gwyne to tuck up wid!"

Liss's last sentence explained the whole thing; she was tired of Sam, and was going to a new man.

Turning to Sam, I said: "I can do nothing for you; Liss is not willing to go back to you, and I would n't have any thing more to do with her. You have forgiven her, but she wont forgive you, and she may be sorry for it, some day. That's all," I said, "you may go now."

The next day Liss was taken down with small-pox. It was melancholy to see Sam frequently standing at the door of the hospital between working hours, and talking to sick Liss. He had never had the small-pox, and could not summon up enough courage to go in where she was; but there he would stand, on the outside, talking with her, often taking her over such luxuries as sardines, cove oysters, crackers, etc., which he would hand to the nurse at the door. During all this time the new lover, for whom Liss had discarded Sam, never came near her, and when she got up from her attack, her face was so disfigured that he would not look at her, and by that time Sam had taken up with another woman, and so the much-coveted Liss was left alone.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

JIMMY WATSON AND THE SMALL-POX.

As soon as we closed our bargain with Colonel Gray, we had his outfit moved down to Hebron, which relieved the hands on watch at the plantation above, among whom, as we have said, was Jimmy Watson. We put Jimmy at once in charge of our blacksmith-shop, where he was proving himself as serviceable as he was small and homely. We soon found him to be thoroughly trusty, prompt, a competent workman, and in no sense an eye-servant. Wherever he was, there was sunshine, and his loud, merry laugh was perfectly contagious. He was respected by all the laborers on the plantation, and his influence was the very best. He had a decided disgust for the short-comings of the race of which his fraction of negro blood made him as much part and parcel as if there had been no mixture in his veins. Many were the good, wholesome lectures he would earnestly deliver when he thought his people needed them. He understood the meaning of freedom in its broadest and fullest sense, as applied to his race, and he prized it as he did his wife.

He was accustomed to say that "half the niggers don't 'zarve their freedom, the way they 're gwyne on. I don't see what" such-and-such a negro, naming him, "was ever born for. He's a disgrace to his race." He kept his blacksmith-shop in splendid shape, never allowed his work to drive him, and there was no haggling about the number of hours he was to labor—if necessary for him to work until midnight, or all day Saturday, or at any time out of hours, either in the shop or out of it, I had but to say the word, and he could turn off abundance of work. He was not one of that somewhat numerous class of workmen who

are always commencing their jobs—he never had any thing to say about what he was "going to do." When a job was called for it was pretty certain to be ready; and he only spoke of that which he had already accomplished. He was practical and had a graft of executive ability, which it was delightful to discover in the midst of so much which was its very opposite. In him was material for some high executive officer;—he could carry out a programme promptly and thoroughly, and his ideas about the management of a plantation, and the way to farm, seemed to me good. We had yet to test him on these points, but he said he was as good an engineer as he was blacksmith, and could do far better farming than any we were having done.

As may be readily supposed, Jimmy gave us great pleasure. Here was certainly one instance where the white graft on a negro stock had produced a splendid cross. Honesty, capacity, industry, education and humor were all shut up in this little fellow. One might say that every thing about him was white but his skin, and then add that it was more than half white, too.

Jimmy had one fault, however, personal to himself—his inordinate extravagance. He was the best customer the Hebron store had, and kept his wages traded out as close as he kept the mixture of hair and wool on his head cropped. In the case of his hair, you could see the skin on any part of his head; and in the case of his pocket, there never was a ten cent piece in it. Not a night passed that he did not carry home some article of luxury for his Mary. But kings and princes have lavished fortunes on far less beautiful women than Jimmy was now lavishing his daily earnings on, and after all, his spend-thrift course may not have been so much a characteristic as it was a desire to devote every penny of his earnings to this Southern beauty of his, but for whom he might have been the veriest niggard.

Jimmy gained great *eclat* on the plantation by the mere fact of having such a beautiful woman for a wife, though

with his bright, intelligent eyes, merry laugh, and striking characteristics, he would soon have won his way as a leader, even without her at his side. Another trait in Jimmy's character was his assurance. We wanted a chimney rebuilt, for one of the cabins, that had fallen down. He said that he could do it, and he did build it, but at the cost of eight barrels of lime, when, as we afterwards discovered, one would have been sufficient. This, however, added only thirty-five dollars to the Dobson estimate, and it was looked upon as a matter of small consequence. We used to laugh at it as a good joke.

Jimmy was my right-hand man every Saturday evening when I distributed rations—now measuring molasses, now cutting up rounds of pork, diving into the meat-tub, dealing out handsful of salt, cracking jokes, and keeping every body in good humor with his merry laughter. When he was not blacksmithing, or caressing Mary, he was pretty sure to be hunting for deer, and many were the deer he brought in, as well as other game. I had bought a Spencer rifle, thinking to do some hunting, but Jimmy was not long in trading me out of it, for what he said was a silver watch, but which turned out to be galvanized, and did not understand the first lesson of time-keeping.

The next victim to small-pox after Liss was Jimmy. He was ailing for several days before I found out what was the matter with him. His hammer, which had been wont to ring out on the anvil early and late, and with all the vigor there was in his wonderfully vigorous little body, grew feeble and less frequent in its stroke, until finally, when I went across to his shop one morning, there were a few incipient pimples on his forehead; and when I told him what ailed him, he let his hammer fall at the side of his anvil, and his pale mulatto complexion, which was already suffused with the fever then running through his veins, grew paler. The expression on his face was that frequently seen in the faces of soldiers when about to make a dangerous charge, or in those

of persons about to undergo a critical surgical operation. There was the evident nerving of himself for the task before him, when he fully realized its nature. The pallor was almost instantly followed by the decision to endure the stroke courageously.

"I don't mind it," he finally said, deliberately, as if he was still revolving the painful discovery in his thoughts, "for me, but ef Mary should git it, it would kill me. Can't you give her something, Mr. Harding, that will keep it from her?"

"Has she been vaccinated?" I asked.

"Yes; I done had her vaccinated in Vicksburg, and it tuck on both arms, an' the doctor done kep the scab for his use, case he said Mary was sich a healthy subject."

"Then there is n't much danger for her, but you must go into the hospital immediately, and Mary will have to keep away from you all the time while you are sick."

"I 'll go anywhar, or do any thing, ef only Mary kin be spared; it would kill me plum dead to see her smooth skin all pock-marked."

And then he looked at me very earnestly, as if his last sentence had called up some unpleasant thought, which it had, for he said, with a troubled expression:

"But, Mr. Harding, I 'm to be pock-marked. I 'm none o' the han'somest now—what ef I live to git out of the hospital, with my face all blotches, as it will be, like Sambo Jinkins's, who 's jist come out, and Mary should be sot agin me, and should n't love me?"

It was melancholy to see the painful expression on his face at this thought. He seemed to grow five years older all in a moment, and his knees knocked against each other, while his whole frame shook as if with ague.

"I would rather die with the small-pox den to hev this to happen."

I told him to console himself with the thought of what he had just said; that he was none of the handsomest

now, and that if Mary had been after a pretty man, she would never have picked him up. "A few blotches on your face," I said, "will make no difference with Mary's love." He was such a fountain of mirth, my suggestion that he could not become much uglier than he was now, called forth his merry laugh, though not very loud or hearty.

Jimmy then gave some directions to his assistant, who was a very good blacksmith himself, and would now have to take charge of the shop, about the work on hand, and about keeping every thing in order, and locking up carefully at night, when, after taking a lingering look all around the shop, with the tell-tale thought on his features, that perhaps he was never to see the place again, he said:

"I 'll go, now, to the hospital and get into bed, for I feel a pow'ful misery in my bones. On my way I 'll say good-bye to Mary." So, with his hands clasped over his fevered forehead, he crossed into the yard of the quarters, walked up to his cabin door, and called "Mary!" She came out on the gallery at once, when he cried out to her, his face expressing alarm:

"Do n't come a-nigh me, Mary; you must n't tech me, for I'se got the small-pox, and I 'm gwyne over to the hospital to be nussed. Take good care of yourself, and keep away from me, and do n't forget how Jimmy used to look, becaze when you see me agin I 'll be ugly."

Mary wrung her hands, and wept bitterly, crying out, "It do n't make no difference how ugly you is; I 'longs to you, and will never 'long to nobody else;" then, with faces indicative of true agony, they separated, bidding each other good-bye, and looking back at each other until he disappeared in the hospital. There was no thought of self with him, except so far as his loathsome disease might influence or change the feelings of Mary toward him; and when she assured him, as she had just done, that she would be true to him, he was at once relieved. I followed him

into the hospital, and found him undressing with the utmost coolness and courage.

Jimmy had a most violent attack, and was delirious at times. One night, in his half frenzy, he got up, and had gone as far as the door, with the wild intention of rushing out and running away; but he had just reason enough left, with his good common sense, to think, "Now, if I do this it will kill me;" and so he dragged himself, as it were, forcibly, back into bed and covered himself up, and asked the nurse, who was awakened by the noise, to strap him down, for fear he would have another paroxysm and not be able to control himself. He was as tractable as a babe, and never failed to take his medicine, and have my least order carried out. In this way he stood guard over himself, and would not allow the nurse to neglect him in the slightest degree.

"May be ef I take good keer of myself I wont be much marked, and then wont Mary be pleased!" At this thought, in his enfeebled condition, he would give vent to the faintest thread of a laugh. He would not allow a breath of fresh air to strike him, and so, by his great prudence, he pulled through.

Mary was constantly cooking for him such delicacies as she could secure, and sending them to him. She never asked to visit him, nor did she seem anxious about him, as I expected she would. The fact is, nature had been so lavish in her physical charms, that it had played the common freak, and neglected those of the mind. She was rather of the sluggish or sleepy disposition—in this respect showing strongly the negro cross in her. In order to be interested she had to *see* the object; she could not hold its image in her mind. While Jimmy was at her cabin door, and she was bidding him good-bye, she showed considerable feeling; but when he was shut in by the hospital walls, she did not seem concerned about him. But whether this was a result of heartlessness or childishness, or deception, or

something of each, when Jimmy, at last a convalescent, put his head out of the door, then tottered forth upon the gallery, and Mary saw him, there was all the animation of their separation renewed.

"Why, dere 's Jimmy," she exclaimed, and then her face was suffused with pleasure; "I kin hardly wait for the time to come for him to cross over." When he finally came, a few days later, with his gait unsteady from weakness, toward her, and looked anxiously into her face, to see whether she was shocked at the sight of his scarred and disfigured features, Mary said to him, "Jimmy, you 's jes the same to me 's you was afore." Jimmy's eyes lit up with joy. It was a touching sight. They fell into each others arms, and tears of happiness dropped from their eyes.

Jimmy felt it to be a critical moment for him; he hesitated a day or two, before he could get courage enough to go across. He got an old piece of a looking-glass in some way, and when I made my visits to the hospital, I would catch him eying himself in it, as if trying to make up his mind how much of a fright he was; then, again, he would creep out upon the gallery, and Mary would come out upon hers, and they would talk to each other, his faint voice being hardly strong enough to carry itself across to Mary's gallery.

"I want to get Mary sort o' used to me," he said, "afore I go over, so 's not to shock her so bad when she sees me clost."

But, when the meeting came, Mary did not appear in the least shocked, for there she was, in all her loveliness, in Jimmy's arms, clinging to the unsightly little fellow as the ivy clings to the scorched and riven tree, rubbing her hand over his rough face, and looking into his bright eyes, which were the only feature unchanged—they were more brilliant that ever—and showing every mark of wifely affection.

Jimmy's hammer soon began to strike again feebly, and it was some time before it gained its wonted vigor.

Next, after Jimmy, the small-pox attacked the white man Adjutant Johnson had brought down as engineer. He had not been very select in the company he kept at night, and so fell a victim. I had a room prepared for him in the gin-house, put a competent nurse in charge of him, and gave him the best care I could; but he was a loose-jointed, indolent man, without any power of resistance in his composition, so there was no struggle for life on his part, and without appearing to be very sick, he shortly died.

The inmates of our small-pox hospital averaged about five during the siege of the disease, which had its run through the plantation, attacking some mildly, and others with great virulence, the deaths being eight, including two who escaped from the nurse, as already related, and who died the second day following.

As often as a death occurred, all hands insisted on stopping work until the corpse was buried. Mrs. Harding's cook, Jane, recovered, but both her children died. As was previously arranged, when Jane recovered she took her place as our cook. She was now childless, and seemed to be restless about some thing, was very inefficient, and finally I had to dismiss her. The old overseer, whose mistress she had been, was in the neighborhood, having just returned from Texas. The "grape-vine telegraph," as it was called, informed Jane of the fact, and she wanted to get back to him, which was the cause of her unrest. As soon as I dismissed her, she went back to him, ostensibly as cook.

I should gladly have put Clara into her place, but she said, "I's done burnt myself out over de fire, an' cookin' makes me dizzy like. I 'd rether work in de fiel'." And so, in my distress, Jimmy let Mary come back to me as my

cook, until I could get some one else. As he was so careful of her, he did not wish to have her work out permanently.

CHAPTER XLIX.

A CHAPTER OF HORRORS.

HEBRON was rapidly assuming the atmosphere of a hospital. Shortly after the departure of our families, the rains ceased, the skies cleared, and the sun shone out with torrid fervor. The waters in the ditches and bayous—choked up as they were, and no longer fed—soon became sour stagnant pools, with a coating of green scum, the vapors from which filled the air with that something popularly called "malaria." The river dropped within its banks, and left the slough in front of the levee—made by the barrow-pits from which the dirt was taken to build the levee—a long, narrow, slimy pond. It was overshadowed by knotted, gnarly willows, hackberries, water-oaks, and straight cotton-woods, which in turn were festooned from root to branch with enormous vine-growths, such as the trumpet-creeper, wild-grape, American ivy, and poison oak, making in all a tangled, sun-proof mass. Clumps of palmetto and swamp grasses, with blades broad as a Mexican dagger, shot up out of the water, rendering the slough swamp-like in the extreme. When it was fed by the rains and the back-water from the Mississippi, ducks had been fond of the place, but now they flew away from the sour, filthy pool, and in their stead came swarms of moccasin snakes, which delighted to coil themselves up on the limbs of bushes growing out of the water, in bunches sometimes as large as a peck basket, from their perches hissing defiance at

passing objects, whether of human or brute kind, or wriggling along through the green scum on the surface of the water. There were also to be seen, these hot, sunny days, schools of turtles on projecting logs and limbs. Occasionally an alligator was seen thrusting his nose through the green up against a log, or the more venturesome smaller ones on the top of logs, with belated alligator-gars, as long as a man, buffalo-fish and cat as large as a ten-year-old boy, which came into the slough in the back-water of the Mississippi to spawn, and did not get away when the back-water ran out—now either frightened at their imprisonment, or gasping for the want of air in this dead-water, flopping up out of it, parting the scum and making great splashes as if bowlders were here and there thrown into the slough. Little lizards of all hues were to be seen running up and down the sides of the trees, or peering through the vine-growth on bushes and logs. And there was a profusion of insect life swarming under this density of shade. Then, there was the weed-growth rotting in the ditches; the recently turned-up earth exposing decayed vegetable matter—the opening up of fields with the green mold of years upon them: all filling the air with most unpleasant smells, which were passing through the lungs, and gorging the liver with bile. When the vapor began to rise at the dusk of evening, the odor was snakey.

Hitherto I had not understood why this country should be called "a swamp," but it was clear enough now. It did not take long, breathing this atmosphere, before chills and fever showed themselves. Here was another malady added to the small-pox. This was the season of year when, in slave-times, planters left the country with their families, entrusting the management of their plantations to the overseers.

We might have escaped with a comparatively light infliction if we could have controlled the situation as the overseers had been able to do; but, try as we might, the

habits of our laborers were simply fearful. The single men ostensibly slept in the barrack which we had built for our white laborers; but the fact was, they slept around anywhere, now in this cabin, now in that—wherever drowsiness overtook them they dropped asleep. Frequently it was on the gallery, where the heavy dews would saturate their clothing, and all night long they would breathe in the sickening odors with which the air was filled.

Then they insisted on spearing the gar, buffalo, and cat-fish in the slough, with their horrid, snaky odor, and then eating them. They ate muskrats, minks, coons, opossums —in short, every thing they could kill, except snakes. This was done by stealth. We would find their skins in the neighborhood of the quarters. It seemed a second nature in the negroes to eat these outlandish things, and it was impossible to prevent them entirely, although we might and did restrain them.

When we caught a negro in the dusk of evening, or just at break of day, bringing up an alligator-gar from the slough, hooked by the gills upon his spear-pole, and thrown over his shoulder, with the tail dragging on the ground, he would declare he did not intend to eat it, but wanted the hide to tan for shoe-leather; if it were a buffalo or cat-fish, he would make an excuse that he wanted to get the fat out of it, or that there was a bone in it he wanted to tie around his neck, which some one had told him would drive away sickness. In the same way we would catch them bringing in some one of the filthy animals above mentioned, which they always had some ready use for, at their tongue's end, other than eating it; but eat it they would, proof of which was, that persons so caught were generally taken down sick a day or two afterwards.

Peach trees had sprung up all over the plantation during the war. They were loaded with fruit; and as fast as the peaches showed the slightest pink the negroes would pull them and gorge themselves. They did not seem to have

the least thought of waiting for them to get ripe. It was not a question as to who were the guilty ones—they were all guilty. Then, there were a few apple-trees in our beginning of an orchard, and also a couple of pear-trees, the fruits of which they picked by stealth and ate when they were as hard as bullets. We never had a ripe peach, or apple, or pear during the year, and yet there was, all told, a yield of perhaps a thousand bushels. There were watermelon vines scattered through the cotton, yet not a melon was allowed to ripen or get much over half its growth. Their green seeds and rinds, with pieces of green core, were to be seen every day at the heads of the cotton rows, showing that the negroes had been at other work than that of hoeing and plowing cotton.

In consequence of all this, every day the percentage of sickness was on the increase. There was not a night that I was not up with one or more cases of cholera-morbus. This class of sickness was added to the small-pox and chills. Whether my year's experience would make me a creditable planter remained to be seen; but there was not much doubt that it would make me a fair practical physician in the special line of sickness I had to deal with. The item of "medicine and medical attendance free," which had looked so harmless in our contracts, was turning out to be a heavy expense, and an onerous tax upon my tired time. The negroes were perfect in their own estimation. I could never get them to acknowledge a fault; and notwithstanding there was the evidence of their guilt right before them, they would declare they never had eaten a green peach or a green melon, but that it was working in the hot sun, or the salt pork, or sour meal, or something else than the thing itself, which made them sick. My task seemed to be a hopeless one until I could work them up to an acknowledgment of the causes which made them sick, and this seemed, as a general rule, an impossibility. Billy had an old horn which he brought out of the army, and

on which he had learned, among other things, to blow the sick call—so, every morning, he would get out on the gallery, and sound that which the soldiers used to interpret as, "Quinine! quinine! and take it in double doses—and take it in double doses." But that did not answer here;—in my daily round through the quarters, I would frequently find some negro, who had apparently hid himself away, with a burning fever on him, and, as would be the invariable answer, "Wid such a mis'ry in my bones."

My greatest trouble was to get the sick properly nursed. Perhaps this was because these negroes never had the service to perform before, since, when they were slaves, their masters had it done for them. Then, too, when a slave died, there was no funeral ceremony; now the funerals were ponderous affairs, the whole plantation seeming like Sunday, until the body was in the ground, which was not generally until after two days had passed.

The crude idea of the negroes seemed to be that they could pray their dead into heaven, no matter what their previous life had been. So, when a patient was pronounced hopeless, or when death had actually occurred, he was immediately taken charge of by the aunties and uncles who were, as it was called, "'ligious." In the death-room, where the corpse would be laid out, and, before death, while the rattle was in the throat, rude prayers interspersed with singing and exhortations were commenced, which were kept up and increased, as their feelings were worked up to fever-heat, with little or no interruption until the time for burial came, when the party would form in procession behind the wagon, bare-headed, and, singing, follow the dead from the cabin to the grave. With the manual labor attending the funeral, such as making the coffin, digging the grave and preparing the wagon to carry the corpse to the grave, the religious negroes would have nothing to do. Their task was the saving of the soul—the rest we had to hire others to perform. The "sinners,"

as they were called, generally formed in the rear of the "'ninted," and marched to the grave-yard. But while the funeral ceremonies, at the cabin, were performed, they lounged, slept, hunted, speared fish, visited adjoining plantations, and caroused.

Gradually the negroes of the neighborhood—who, at first, brought together from all parts of the country, were strangers—became acquainted with each other. As a consequence, these funeral occasions sometimes extended to adjoining plantations—that is, our people helped to bury the dead of other places, and *vice versa*, which of course increased the number of holidays, and made the hospital aspect still more striking.

These frequent rests were exceedingly demoralizing. After a night's ceremonies over some dead body the participants were illy fitted for the labor of the ensuing day. Scarcely did we get a little tone to our help when either a death would occur, or the Saturday holiday, and then there must be the struggle to tone up again. There were instances where a death would take place Wednesday night, the religious exercises would follow on Thursday and Thursday night, and the funeral on Friday—thus making two days of rest. Then we would try to get a day's work on Saturday, but it was "in de contrac'"—no work on Saturday; and so, as often as we tried it, we had to give it up, and thus it was that four solid days in seven were spent outside of the field.

Some of the deaths might have been avoided with only a small percentage of the attention in nursing which was given to their funerals afterward. I strove hard to work up an efficient corps of nurses, but met with no sort of success, our heads of squads proving as great failures as the rank and file; and so, from mere necessity, I turned one side of our store-room into a hospital, and when I found a critical case I had it moved there, where, adjoining

our own sleeping-room as it was, I could give it my personal attention.

The funerals of the small-pox victims were not so ceremonious as those of the negroes who died of other diseases; there was no taking charge of the corpse until it was placed in the coffin. But then the exercises commenced with a vim, and were all the more boisterous because of the shortness of time in which to expend their fervor and pray away the sins of the dead. And a small-pox funeral always meant one day out of the field.

CHAPTER L.

BUZZARDS AND INSECTS, ETC.

THERE was a tall, dead tree, with its far-reaching, crooked limbs still intact, in the midst of the slough in front of the levee, which served as a roosting-place by night and a perch by day for a flock of turkey-buzzards. So fond of any thing in the shape of death, they selected this dead tree for a home instead of a living one, whose leaves would have afforded them both shade and shelter. From this perch they spied their food in the slough below them, and in the country round about, either dropping down upon it, or flying off after it, whether it were a dead snake, a fish, a dog, a Texas steer, or that apparently to them most delicate of all dishes, a dead mule. Whatever it might be, from the largest animal down to the tiniest bird, or reptile, would be picked clean within twenty-four hours after its death. No matter in what out-of-the-way place, however hid by tangled growth, nothing ever escaped them. I frequently found them in the depths of our woods, or in

the midst of our cane-brake, while I rode in search of a stray mule, burrowing in the side of a dead rabbit, or a squirrel, or a deer, or pulling away at a snake. Seeing them on their roost one would say, "What lazy birds they are," for there they would sit until the sun was well up, each spreading out its wings and tail to dry, looking like a stuffed eagle in a museum, or reminding one of a filthy tramp, sitting on the edge of a stream, waiting for the sun to dry the dew off his rags before taking up his march again. And yet they performed their work with a fidelity which, if imitated by our laborers, would have given our plantation a very different appearance. Their task was also executed noiselessly. They only flapped their wings when alighting or leaving their perch or feast. The rest of their journey was made by sailing through the air with extended, but motionless wings. Never a sound came from their ungainly beaks, nor were they grudging toward each other, but would work together over the common prey with the utmost harmony and good feeling;—frequently one party of buzzards, finding another already at their meal, with all the space occupied, would quietly take up their perch in the neighborhood, waiting for the first ones to gorge themselves, flutter up and sail away: sometimes coming and going singly, in which case, as fast as a vacant space would be made at the feast it would be occupied by a waiting bird. Thus there was never any wrangling over the meal, and, save the motion of the wings of those coming and going, all was quiet as the grave.

Nothing ever disturbed their feast except the hungry dogs, to which they would give way. While we knew that these scavengers only did us good, it was yet melancholy to see them every-where, now sailing along low down, and now but a speck in the air from their great height, or else deliberately at their work, with that quiet which surrounds the dead, and with a faithfulness and a thoroughness un-

equaled. Where there was a mortality among the lower animals great enough to require so many busy beaks and claws, there would, of necessity, be great sickness and mortality among human kind. I often wondered whether these feasters on the dead ever died themselves. I never saw one of them dead, as I frequently saw other birds; nor could I ever discover any signs of nesting or of young among them. They all had the slow movements of age, seeming, in their faded black garb, with wrinkled heads and necks, superannuated, if such a thing were possible with them. The buzzard was one bird the negroes never shot. They had a superstition among them that when buzzards reached a given age they turned into black cats.

What a country we found this for insect life! Seeming to partake of the wealth of soil here, which doubled and quadrupled the size of every thing, whether a weed, a blade of grass, a stalk of cotton, a shrub or tree—all varieties of insects grew and flourished. Take a particular species of bug, fly, moth, or other insect, and it was larger than, and there were a hundred of them here to every one of those outside of this swamp region. During the day the heat of the sun drove them into the weeds and brambles and swamps for shade, but when night came on, they swarmed out from their hiding-places, and filled the air with their singing, buzzing, hissing and screaming sounds.

A lamp-light in our bed-room was a general invitation for every thing with wings or legs to come in, and come they did in all sizes and shapes, striking the exposed parts of my body, getting into my ears, nose, and eyes, crawling up my pantaloons—in short, searching out and passing over every part of my body. First and foremost in numbers, as well as annoyance, were the musquitoes—the little striped-legged fellows by day and the large, vicious ones by night. There was no such a thing as wearing slippers, because these pests would blister my ankles—so I had to swelter in high shoes. Frequently they came in such

swarms as to drive me under the bar before bed-time, and about the only comfort I experienced this year was when I was thus shut away from them, hearing them sing, and by the aid of the lamp, seeing them beat themselves against the bar, as if enraged at being thus defeated in their attack on me. At dusk they were worse than at any other time. Then a smoke was absolutely necessary. So I had an iron bucket made, which every evening at that hour was filled with chips, fired, and placed so that the breeze would blow the smoke on our gallery, and into our store and bed-room.

Then there were millers of every conceivable shape, size, and hue, and in such numbers as almost to put our light out at night, fluttering over and into it, scorching their wings, but still keeping up the attack until the flame of the lamp would transform them into mere bugs, when they would go hopping about, like wounded soldiers, on our table. I could have furnished a pint of millers, more or less singed, almost any night. One evening the "zip bugs" got so bad we had to shut down the window and close the door. Then we turned in and captured those in the room, and they filled a half-gallon measure.

There was a little fly about the size of a flax seed, which was particularly annoying, because it would flit against our lamp and leave little specks of fuz on it, until it would have a coating all over, so that after having a very bright light we would have a very dull one. This insect I could have furnished by the pint. Being so small the mortality in numbers was great. They banked themselves up, as it were, around the base of our lamp, dead, after whipping the coating off their wings and bodies against its side.

It was astonishing how destructive an agent a single coal-oil lamp was to this insect life. I never knew our lamp to beguile a mosquito, however. What they came for was our blood, and they knew well enough that the journey to seek it did not lie through that little light on our table. But, lift our bar a moment, and how they would

swarm under it!—and if there chanced to come in it a hole the size of a pea, it seemed as if all the musquitoes in the neighborhood would know of it in a very short time.

Then there were beetles, crickets, katydids, tree-toads; and every pond and slough was filled with frogs, from the over-grown bull-frog, with his hoarse "blonk," to the piping baby ones—all of which aided in making the nights hideous indeed.

There were swarming lizards, swarming moccasin snakes; droves of turtles, alligators, turkey-buzzards, owls; swarms of flies by day, and musquitoes, millers, and innumerable bugs and insects by night. Add to these small-pox, chills and fever, cholera-morbus; days that were red-hot; a region so foul and filthy with its stagnant pools and decaying matter that all the disinfectants in the country, poured into it or scattered over it, would not have purified it; with a diet which made a man who cared any thing about what he ate, or was at all fond of wholesome food, go hungry; not a drop of milk to drink, not a pound of ice—nothing but ham, coffee, saleratus buscuit, hoe-cake, and bean soup!

CHAPTER LI.

CONDITION OF OUR CROP.

How fared our cotton during this season of miasma? Very much as fares a weed-ridden garden which its owner undertakes to redeem, and begins by giving it the shallowest of plowing, plants it with indifferent or defective seed, and then lets the weeds get a good start of the plants, which come out of their shallow beds feeble, because of the feeble germ. Our plowing had been shallow, our seed

defective; and we had been forced—having untaught labor and being ourselves untaught—to let the weeds and grass get a start of the young and feeble cotton-plant, doubly feeble now because of its germ, and the hard bed it had to rest in.

Then, when the rains came, the malarial season set in with every thing favorable to the promotion of disease.

When an army is smitten with sickness, its commander closes the campaign, goes into quarters, and addresses himself to the task of getting his soldiers well—his camp for the time being becomes a hospital. When a community of people finds a pestilence in its midst, business is suspended and every body either flees away, or assists to nurse the sick, or waits with bated breath until the epidemic is over. We were having just such experiences, but our task was in no shape to be postponed. We had to flounder along with it, but it was sorry progress we were making.

The motto of the cotton-plant is, "Give me room according to my strength." That was just what we were not doing. Drive a board down on one side of a cotton-plant, and that side will grow up without a limb on it. Put it down on the other side, and there will be no limbs there; put boards around the four sides, and there will not be a limb on the entire stalk—nothing but the shoot from the top, which will continue to grow during the season.

It is the limbs from the ground up which bear the cotton, and it is absolutely necessary that there should be a space left around each stalk, so that the limbs can commence to shoot out from the ground as the stalk grows up. Our cotton was in the grass, and it was this grass and the weeds which were, so to speak, planked around each cotton stalk. These, therefore, were forced to grow up like so many willow withes. Until the weeds were taken away by the hoe and plow our cotton-plants could not even begin their preparation for fruit, by beginning to put forth limbs. As long as the plants were in their straight-jackets,

they would run to height; whatever height they reached before being released from this confinement of weeds, there would be no limbs, and so no fruit from the ground upward. A stalk growing to a height of two feet, and unable to send out limbs as it grows, by reason of being surrounded by weeds and grass, will be entirely fruitless, as well as limbless, for that distance. As I have elsewhere explained, it is these ground-limbs which bear the first and best crop, because this is the first to blossom, it ripens in the shade, and the boll does not open prematurely. It is to cotton what blackberries that ripen on the under side of the bush in the shade are to the ordinary blackberries which ripen on top of the bush in the sun. The first blossoms, having the whole season in which to mature, produce cotton of a longer staple, and therefore more valuable. Hence it is that this first picking, this bottom crop, being the first to open, always commands the best price.

By reason of our cotton being in grass, this bottom crop was lost to us. The order of yield being, first, the bottom crop; second, the middle; and third, the top crop, and our bottom crop being lost, it followed that a third of our crop was gone. It was the best third, too, because of the length of staple. The bottom limbs being the first to begin growing, and growing and fruiting during the whole season, they would be longer and so have more fruit on them than the later comers, the middle limbs, and far more than the still later comers, the top limbs, which, by reason of such lateness and the contingency of the worm, were of uncertain yield.

These points being considered, perhaps we should be more nearly correct to say that the loss of our bottom crop meant the loss of half our crop. It certainly meant this unless the season were very favorable—that is, unless the frost were late in coming and there should be no worm.

Then it was a shock to the plant not to be allowed to put out its lower limbs. It was violating the natural

course of its growth. When we got the weeds and grass away, there would be no lower limbs to shade and keep the ground moist and cool around the roots. One who knows any thing about agriculture will readily understand the damaging effect to the cotton-plant which its choking up by weeds and grass would have, as well as the difficulty in cultivating it. Plow and hoe a row of corn which has neither weeds nor grass, but is worked simply to keep the ground stirred and mellow around the growing plant, then plow and hoe a row that is choked with weeds and grass—what a difference there is! A dozen rows of the former can be worked with ease, while one of the latter is gone through with infinite strain to both laborer and mule.

Grass and weeds, like every thing else, grew rank in this wonderful soil; but, at this time, running riot as they had done during the war, they had substantially taken possession of the country. In justice to the cotton-plant, the ground should have been stirred and hoed so frequently that neither weed nor grass would be permitted to show itself. Our whole plantation should have been cultivated three times a month, while at the rate we were going we could not get over our fields oftener than once a month. The plant was not receiving anything like justice at our hands. It had its season for putting out its lower limbs, but the treatment we were giving it would not allow it to do this. The limbs come out with the buds at the top, and if they are not allowed to come then, they never come afterwards. There would be no shooting of limbs from the sides of the stalk after the weeds and grass were hoed away. If the limbs were allowed an equal start, they would frequently run out as fast as the stalk ran up, never stopping until the space of from four to six feet between the rows, and the interval of from twelve to twenty-four inches between the plants in their respective rows, were passed over and the limbs locked together in a full and healthy growth.

The labor of getting our crop free from grass and weeds was further injuring it. The crop-grass having wrapped itself around the plant, in pulling it away from the root of the cotton the plant itself would be loosened to such an extent that it would frequently wilt as if transplanted, and as fast as we worked our fields over they would take on a more decided hue of yellow.

Even the mere working of a field, where there are no weeds to destroy—simply to keep the ground stirred and to put fresh mellow earth to the plant—checks its growth for the time being. How much more was this the case with our sick cotton-plants, which we had to search for, and then pull the weeds and grass away! It was a tedious operation: first, to find the plant; second, to cut the weeds and grass away from it; third, to find a little fresh earth to put around it. Our thirty to forty hoe-hands, divided into their three squads, made very small clearings in the weed and grass-patches from day to day. Striking out wildly and carelessly with their hoes, the negroes frequently cut down stalks of cotton which were needed to make the required stand, and as often in pulling away tufts of crop-grass the cotton-plant would come with it. We began cultivating with a pretty fair stand of cotton—that is, the plants were thick enough; but every time our hoes struck the ground the necessary stalks were cut up or pulled up as they pulled the grass back. After a field was gone over, therefore, there would be frequent ugly gaps in the cotton.

It was pitiful to see the fields before they were hoed out; but it was more pitiful to see them afterwards. The cotton was small of leaf and stalk, wilted, and yellow, with no bottom leaves on it. What little loose earth was visible was in great clods, like the bowlders in a New England field. An ugly broad band of grass and weeds was in the middle of the cotton rows, leaving only a little strip of earth between it and the plants. The plants themselves

were so weak they could scarcely stand alone. The whole scene was as perfect a picture of despair as it is possible to conceive; but the consoling word was passing around, "We 've seen sicker crops than these come out;—only get your cotton out of the grass, and with a late season and no worm, even without the bottom crop, there is a chance for a bale to the acre." There was the usual reasoning, moreover, that a late spring means a late fall. The village merchant said:

"I would n't be at all surprised if we did n't have frost until December, and cotton makes until frost here."

No one expected the worm, or at least such was the talk. Instances were cited, by every one to whom I spoke, of how the worm had come in former times and then disappeared. And so the thing went on, everybody breathing hope into one another, whilst the plantations were pictures of poverty.

We had here and there a few acres of cotton which was good enough. Near the plantation quarters was a field which Cato and James had cultivated during the war. This gave us no trouble, growing splendidly—a beautiful sight—blossoming and bolling from the ground. This field was not weed-ridden, and, if we had known it, it was the key to our whole trouble. But, instead of attributing it to the proper cause, we set it down as being better land and under better cultivation. We had plowed it more thoroughly, but the fact is, we had plowed it well because it was already in a good state of cultivation from the work of previous years.

There were some sand ridges on the place on which there was very pretty cotton, and the bramble patches were turning out fairly, simply because weeds and grass do not grow on sandy land or in bramble patches. This lesson we learned later in our cotton experience.

But all our good patches together would not have measured fifty acres, and, except the bramble patches, these

were really the poorest land we had on the place, and the most uncertain for cotton—for, later in the season, when the ground would become parched with heat and drouth, the cotton on this sandy land would burn up, before it could possibly make over half a crop; while the cotton on the heavy black land, which looked so utterly hopeless now, would be in its glory, never burning out or dying, but continuing to make cotton until the frost came.

This black land, which was now giving us so much trouble—because we could not get our plows into it, the weeds and grass grew so fast on it, and where consequently the cotton would not grow—is called buck-shot land. It should be plowed in the early spring or late winter—January, February, or March—when the rains are pouring down and the ground is full of rain and seepage water from the Mississippi, so that it runs in the furrows. This is the only time when the plow can be driven into it—that is, when thus saturated with water. The ground breaks up in great cakes, which harden when the rains cease like lumps of lime, but when another rain comes on, these melt down into round particles the size of buck-shot, as lime slackens when water is poured over it, only of course there is no steam or heat.

If, this first year, we had plowed our black land, when thus saturated with rain, we could have gone to a good depth, burying the weed and grass-seeds, so that they would not have come out of the ground simultaneously with our cotton. And what a magnificent bed this would have given for our young cotton!

This buck-shot land may be cultivated, and is mellow just the depth it is plowed in the spring; so, if plowed wet, there is deep, and consequently thorough, cultivation, and inevitably good cotton; while, if plowed when dry, it is shallow, and shallow cultivation follows, with a poor crop, inevitably. We have undertaken to plow this buck-shot land when dry, using two yoke of oxen and a sub-soil

plow; the latter we broke all to pieces, and we left the oxen with their tongues lolling out from exhaustion, without reaching the depth which it was perfectly easy to reach with a small pair of mules and an ordinary-sized plow, when the same ground was saturated with water.

It was the lack of knowledge of this simple fact that cost the new-comers this year many thousand bales of cotton. If the planter who reads this page has a tough piece of buck-shot land, which he does not know how to handle, let him try the above plan, and, my word for it, he will not exchange it, after seeing the result, for the same quantity of land on another part of his place. This buck-shot land, in the season of plowing, unless saturated with water, reminds one of putty; and when it dries out in summer, it is like dried putty, save that which the plows have turned up in the spring and the rains have slackened, thus rendering it mellow as an ash-heap.

CHAPTER LII.

GENERAL DOBSON'S RETURN.

General Dobson returned about the 15th of June, landing at Hebron. With him came my servant George. The boat also put off an iron-hooped barrel and a very large, stylish-looking and stylishly marked box.

Dobson said they were to go up to the store with his luggage. On the way up from the landing he informed me that the barrel contained beer, which he had purchased in Memphis as he came along.

"I thought it would be a good idea," he explained, "to give our negroes a Fourth of July celebration, and I bought

the beer for the occasion. It will give them something to look forward to, and maybe they will work better. In slavery times the cultivation season was over by the Fourth of July. Are we likely to get our crop in shape so soon?"

"No, we are desperately bad off."

"Let us then tell the laborers that we will give them a feast if they will get us out of the grass by that time. Besides, as their teachers, I think it but right to start them off in the habit of celebrating the Nation's independence. You can read the Declaration, and I will deliver the oration. If this prospect of a holiday stimulates them to work better, as I think it will, we shall thus be combining profit with duty. What do you think of the idea?" he asked, after pausing long enough for me to reply, and I failing to do so.

"Well, it is pretty much all experiment," I said. "This is the year of experiments. We may hit upon some plan, after a while, that will stimulate our laborers to work as they ought to. The plan you suggest may be a good one; but, to be frank, I have n't much more patriotism left in me than the soldiers had towards the end of the war, and, instead of reading the Declaration of Independence, I feel more like reading the riot act. Besides, I do n't know that the negroes have much reason to be jubilant over the Fourth of July. It was n't that day that gave them their independence. The anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation is their Fourth of July."

"I do n't doubt it is all very vexatious. Still I think the negroes should be educated to celebrate all national holidays."

Just then the wagon passed us on its way up from the landing, the mysterious box peering up above the barrel of beer and the General's luggage.

"What have you there?" I inquired.

"You know you gave me an order for a few brier-root pipes," Dobson answered, looking at me and coloring up.

"Well, I went into a tobacco store in Cincinnati, and they showed me different kinds. I took half a dozen, a dozen, and so on, of each variety—including some very pretty meerschaums with bishops' and dogs' heads, and eagles' claws holding plain bowls. I also selected a quantity of silk tobacco-pouches and meerschaum cigar-holders with amber mouth-pieces. I did n't think I had bought so much, but when they handed me the bill it amounted to three hundred and sixty-five dollars. That is what is in that box! I felt like sinking into the floor when I saw what the bill figured up, but I had agreed to take the articles, and I would n't have let the merchant know how I was sold for the amount of the bill!

"Fortunately for me, I had on my person that money you ordered your partner in the drug-store to send to you by me. So I told him to receipt the bill, and I paid him out of it. You can just credit yourself with the amount on our company books, and charge the same to merchandise," he added, as he saw me looking at him not a little ruefully. "That reminds me," he said, "the barrel of beer cost thirty-five dollars, and I also used your money to pay for that, which you will want credit for, and which, I think, should be charged to expenses, should it not?"

"Yes, I think it should, unless you are a mind to consider it a permanent investment; and in that case it should be charged to the plantation," I said, with a ghastly attempt to be facetious.

The plantation was proving such a sieve for money, that we were growing to be none too flush. I had a particular place for the sum my partner in the drug-store was sending me by Dobson, and here were four hundred dollars out of six hundred he had for me trundling along up to the plantation store in the shape of a box of pipes and a barrel of beer! Think of it—meerschaum pipes, meerschaum cigar-holders with amber tips, and silk tobacco-

pouches, for an exclusively negro trade, in a plantation store!

"I am sure I do n't know what we shall ever do with that quantity of pipes," I said. "This is a great smoking community, I know, but no one ever trades at our store, except our own hands. I doubt, however, if the whole county traded with us, judging from the size of your box, and the amount of your bill, whether they could exhaust the supply."

"It is a very unfortunate purchase, but what could I do after I had bought them, but pay for them? I never could have spunked up courage enough to tell the merchant how badly I was fooled. So I did the other thing, which was to take them as if I really wanted them. But it does n't matter much," he added, shortly after, as if he had been revolving the thing over in his mind; "even if we do n't sell a pipe—and of course we shall sell some, because you said the negroes called for them—three bales of cotton this fall will pay for this experience of mine."

"I only hope it will teach you the lesson," I said a little snappishly, "never again to buy, for the plantation, what you see, but to buy only that which we want: first, having a written list before entering a place to purchase, and then only getting that which your list calls for."

"I think it will be a lesson to me for the future," he said, laughing; "I do n't believe I would ever buy another such a box of pipes, or any thing else in the same way."

"We shall hardly need to buy any more pipes," I replied, determining in my own mind to make the best of it, "if we should continue the Hebron enterprise for fifty years! But what possessed you to get cigar-holders? You know we have no cigars to sell."

"That is so, but I never thought of it." Then he turned instantly, and, looking at me very earnestly, said:

"Mr. Harding, I will esteem it as a favor if you will keep this pipe experience to yourself. To say nothing of

the quantity of the purchase, it was n't just the thing to buy meerschaums and silk pouches! There is a hat for you, now, if we ever get into civilization again together, if you 'll keep mum on this subject."

I promised that it should not go out of the family, only I must be allowed to laugh over it as much as I wanted to, and to say "pipes" to him if he ever got obstreperous.

"Certainly," he answered.

That night Dobson opened the pipes, but he could only display a small portion of them. There were enough to have filled up all the shelves of our store. They really made the shelves look cheerful. It was right jolly to see the laughing Dutch faces as frontispieces on the pipes. Birds' beaks, grinning monkeys' faces, and an endless variety of caricatures of men's faces, as well as those of birds and animals, made the collection quite a novelty. It was, in one sense, a show, and the negroes never got tired of hanging over the counter, and feasting their eyes on the display. It got noised about in the neighborhood, and negroes from adjoining plantations came to see the sight, but without a cent in their pockets to buy.

We sold, during the season, perhaps fifty dollars' worth. The rest we shipped to an auction store up in St. Louis, and they netted us seventeen dollars and a half.

Dobson's pipe experience then, cost us three hundred dollars. The barrel of beer cost thirty-five dollars. Neither of these items was included in the original Dobson estimate. Indeed, in the light of practical results, as the reader will already have seen, Dobson's estimate was no longer recognizable. I told him as much after our first dinner together, of bean soup, black coffee, and hoe-cake, and when we had squared out for a smoke and a talk.

Just as I was about dropping off to sleep, the first night after Dobson's return, I was aroused by a jar upon our cabin-floor, which was followed by a succession of noises,

like the moving of chairs, tables, etc. Then there was a howl, and Dobson called out:

"Say, Mr. Harding, can you tell me where the matches are? I want to strike a light. The mosquitos have got under my bar. I have barked my shins in this clutter, and the mosquitos are swarming on my bare limbs. I would as soon be standing in a nest of hornets."

I hurried to Dobson's rescue. Used to the room as I was, I found the match-box instantly, and struck a light, which revealed him wedged in between a couple of pieces of furniture, and striking out wildly at the mosquitos. Dobson had three exposed points—face, hands, and ankles—and there was a mosquito for every pore of his body.

I lighted a candle, and told him to jump into bed with it, which he did, welts and all. For once Dobson was in a hurry. Notwithstanding I skipped around the room pretty lively, the mosquitos no sooner found their first victim caged away from them, than they went for me. So I hastened under my bar. Then I called out to Dobson to hold the candle close up to the mosquito, wherever he found one under his bar, and he would fly into it. This he proceeded to do, scratching the bitten places on his limbs and face meanwhile. By the aid of the candle he destroyed fifty-seven. I then instructed him to put his candle on the chair by his bedside, and then to tuck his bar in carefully all around. When he had done this, he said:

"What next?"

"Blow your candle out, through the meshes."—And thus was Dobson safely housed for the night.

CHAPTER LIII.

WE FILL OURSELVES WITH TALK.

The sick-call is not, as a general thing, an agreeable sound, but the morning after Dobson's arrival, I heard it with a feeling almost akin to pleasure. While it told its sad story of the presence of suffering, it was no longer a command for me to administer to this suffering. Dobson was now at the helm of our sick craft, with all his finished skill and great experience, and my service as a physician was at an end. During my practice I had, with only my knowledge as a druggist to guide me, given quinine, blue-mass, opium, castor-oil and cholera-mixture, without any intelligent analysis of the disorder in any case. But now only the proper medicines would be administered, after a careful examination. There would also be added that confidence in the treatment which a physician always inspires, almost as efficacious as his medicine.

I felt as if I had been relieved of more than half my load. My attention, which had hitherto been divided between the field and hospital—much the larger half being given to the hospital—could now be concentrated on the former. The responsibility which I felt on account of the sick people had been very great, and my suspense terrible. To be relieved, and released, was a great comfort to me. I formally turned the cases over to Dobson the evening of his arrival.

On the morning following I had taken my early coffee, leaving Dobson at his morning nap, and when Billy sounded the sick-call I had been in the field with the hoe-

gangs, spurring them up, for more than two hours, and by the time our breakfast-horn sounded, shortly afterwards, we had opened up a good many rows of cotton to air and sunlight.

Whether Dobson's coming had revived my spirits, so that I saw differently, or whether it was so in fact, it certainly seemed the hoe-gangs made better strokes, and moved at a livelier pace than had been their wont. I told them at once about the barrel of beer, and the Fourth of July, which may have spurred them up, as Dobson thought it would. It certainly drew large promises out of them. Every thing appeared brighter this morning, and I went back to my breakfast in a glow.

Dobson, as if by instinct, was in the heated-term in-door costume of the country—shirt, drawers, socks and slippers—engaged in mixing powders for the sick, and giving elaborate directions. He was evidently very much in earnest. George's arrival was the signal for Mary's retirement from the cooking department of our mess. She had only held on, out of the abundance of her own and Jimmy's kindness, unwilling to see me perish for want of something to eat, and indeed I felt very grateful to them. On the other hand, George seemed to be delighted to get back into my personal service, and told Mary she could go at once.

Dobson and I sat down on this first morning to George's first effort in the way of breakfast; or, rather, being hungry, I sat down and began eating at once, while he came in when I was nearly half through. If I had not been so hungry, or if I had been a little patient, this would have been an opportunity for him to keep me waiting. I will here remark that during this entire season, Dobson and myself never sat down to a meal together. He was always at least five minutes late. It soon came to be regarded by both of us as a recognized custom—nothing was said, or apparently thought of it, on either side. As a result, however, my meal was always hot, while his was frequently cold.

There was a happy compromise in this feature of our domestic intercourse, which otherwise might have occasioned unpleasant scenes: I did not ask Dobson to be prompt at the meal; he did not ask me to observe the ceremony of waiting for him; and so we got along together without a jar.

"Did you tell our people about our proposition to observe the Fourth?" Dobson inquired upon taking his seat at the table, and while spreading his napkin over his knees.

"Yes, sir; I told them about it the first thing this morning."

"What do they say?"

"They say they will 'get the cotton out of grass, sure.' They certainly have been putting in good work this morning."

"Mr. Harding, I observed you came in from the field without an umbrella. Are you not in the habit of carrying one when you go out in the hot sun?"

"No, sir; I never carry one. I think it would be setting a bad example to our laborers. If they can work all day in the hot sun, I think we should be able to ride out in it. Besides, I think this thing of getting sick, is pretty much a matter of will. I am determined to be well, *ergo*, I am well. There is not a hand on the place has undergone the exposure I have, and yet I have not been sick an hour. If they would stop eating filthy fish, green fruit, and exercise their will as I do, I don't believe there would be a sick man in our quarters to-day. There was that white engineer Johnson brought; he had a mild attack of small-pox. There was no sort of will in the fellow, and the breath just naturally left his body. Jimmy Watson had a dreadful attack of the same disease, but his will pulled him through. Half the deaths on the place are the result of a lack of will. No, you don't catch me under an umbrella. It is well enough for women to shade themselves, but it was never intended that a man should allow a piece of cloth to

get between his face and the sun. That would be a pretty spectacle, would it not, to see a farmer hiding himself under a cotton umbrella?"

"And yet, most planters here ride out under an umbrella."

"I know they do, but it is, nevertheless, an effeminate habit, and I, for one, am going to do what I can by my example to break it up. If they would throw away their umbrellas, stop drinking whisky, and practice their will, they need have no fear of sickness."

"Well, that is a novel idea, to be sure; but, notwithstanding your practice of will, I fear you are considerably the worse for wear; and I do n't believe it would take any too much to put you on your back," said Dobson, laughing good naturedly, as he scrutinized my face.

"Not a bit of it; I may be thin—I know I am that—but my exposure has simply hardened me. I am down to fighting trim now, and am just sickness-proof."

"Very pretty theories, Mr. Harding, but we shall see how they work out."

"Yes, you will see; I am perfectly willing to stand, or fall, by the test of time. But, by the way, you remember our friend in the rear, Major Layton?"

"Yes."

"We rode down to the village together the other day to get our mails. While I went in to get them the Major remained on the outside. But, a moment later, he came rushing in with a flushed face, and a cut over his left eye, saying: 'A party of young fellows came by where I was standing; one of them struck me as you see, and the rest laughed, crying out, 'Hit him again; he 's got no friends here.' I came in for fear of further harm.'

"I asked the Major who the parties were. He said, 'Some of the young bloods of the town.' Was there no one by to admonish them as to their course? 'Yes, Tyler was there. He scolded them, and appeared very

mad, but, as I turned to come in, I caught him giving them a sly wink, as much as to say that his scolding was all for effect, and tell them to go ahead.' We left town shortly after, and, though not further molested, we were looked at by many scowling faces."

"That is a pretty way to treat a new-comer, is it not? But the same thing is going on all over the South. Of course not the tenth part will ever be known, but enough is leaking out in the North to make our friends very nervous about us. Every one I met had something to say about the horrible murders he had read about, of men more or less prominent in the localities from which they came, and who had come to this country as we have. 'Do you feel safe down there?' was the common question."

"Well, in one sense we are not safe," I said. "To begin with, human life is held of but little more value than mere animal life. Look at the murders committed in the village since we have been here. They would number more than all those committed in a Northern State for five years. The village is full of men who are known to be murderers, and they have the whip-handle. They are freely admitted into what is called 'society,' and they make the sentiment. Give a gang of murderers, anywhere, full sway, and what a community it is! If our village is an index of the country, the South is to-day ruled by thieves and murderers—not that they are on the bench, or wear the robe, but they make the sentiment. These classes are very jealous of their domain, and when they see any one going quietly along, and minding his own business, temperate, moral, and law-abiding, they know at once that he is their opposite. How easy it is to send a bullet through the head of such a person! I have no doubt there are plenty of old settlers here who perfectly abhor this state of affairs. But you could never learn this by any thing they say, or by their looks. The feeling is hid away in the secret recesses of their hearts, because they know full well

if they should raise their voices it would be the signal for their slaughter. It was only the other week that one of this class said to me in response to some hot words of mine on the subject: 'Do you see my gray hairs? It is the knowledge of, and being eye-witness to, inhuman murders here, by the dozen, and the further knowledge of the fact that there is no sentiment of sufficient courage to raise its voice against them, that has put these gray hairs in my head. I know people that are just as much opposed to this state of affairs as I am, and yet not a word ever passes our lips on the subject. We hardly dare think, for fear our faces will tell the story, much less speak. I have my gin-house, home, family, and my own life—if I were to say a word, my property would be destroyed, my family made homeless, and I would be murdered. Therefore my lips are sealed.' And then he looked around with a half-frightened air to see if there was a possibility that any any body had overheard him. I saw him again a few days later, and he told me, with a frightened look, we must not be seen talking together. 'I have been spotted,' he said, 'because we were seen talking earnestly together the other day.'

"First, then, there is the general sentiment, created by the lawless, and acquiesced in by all; then there is the sectional feeling against us, strong as the love of life, and bitter as a family feud. Seeing us quietly at our task, how easy it is for the thieves and murderers to raise the cry of 'Yankees,' 'Our enemies,' in the light of which all classes find a common cause against us. I do n't believe murderers have much love of country about them, but these make the guard of the fields they love to roam in. Keenly on the alert, none will see sooner than they the material of which this Northern immigration is composed. If it means law and order, they will of course want none of it, and, by the array of sectional spirit, no true Southerner will take sides with us. Thus, the feeling of distrust toward

us will soon pass into that of hatred, if it has not already done so.

"I have never hesitated to speak against this murderous, lawless element, because I felt that to live here, and not do so, would be its indorsement. This is just where I blame the good element of the Southern people; if they would take sides against murder and lawlessness, these criminals would either be punished or seek new pastures. And we shall never have a healthy state of affairs until such is the case. 'Going back on the South,' is a potent lash, that whips everybody into line. When a murder occurs, all that is necessary to be known is that the victim was a stranger, and that the murderer was a 'true Southerner,' as is the stereotyped expression. Of course, now and then, with this frequency of murder, a 'true Southerner' is hit. Then there is great expression of grief."

"Barring this cheapness of life, do you think we are safe here?"

"No, sir; I don't. I think, sparcely settled as this neighborhood is by whites, there are a hundred people all around us, burning to pull triggers on us; and, if we were to be shot down, the buzzards would have to care for us, for the reason that, however much the good element might wish to do so, they would not dare to give us a decent burial. I don't believe there is a drop of love for us—on the contrary, it is all gall and wormwood. Of course the soldiers at the village are some protection to us. If they were not here our position would indeed be critical; and the people here have an idea that the President is about to take them away. Do you think that likely?"

"It looks a little that way. Andy Johnson has certainly gone over, body and soul, to the opposition. But, Mr. Harding, you have spoken frequently of 'the good element.' Does not an element cease to be good, when it becomes a shield to crime and wrong-doing?"

"That is certainly the doctrine up in God's country;

but, then, there have been no hundred years of slavery up there, shutting out railroads, muzzling the press, preventing immigration, except such as was brought in the holds of slave-traders, or that which drifted here, and could put on the sentiment of a locality as you do your coat. The South has been barred effectually to all enterprises, and to all sentiments but one, that of slavery. You may talk of your despotisms of the old world, but there never was any thing like this. Only think of the cotton burned here during the war by order. Was there ever any thing more unreasonable, or more suicidal? And yet see how the edict was obeyed. 'The North is taking away our slaves,' was the cry put in their mouths, and yet here was a real, tangible treasure, worth more than all their slaves, which they were burning up themselves, without a public murmur, because it was the sentiment of the South to do so."

"But that was considered patriotism!"

"It was none the less despotism. While our armies were filled with alacrity, how much of the crops of the North would have been destroyed by a similar order to that which caused the cotton to be burned in the South? Not a grain. There is no patriotism in the North which would submit to herding with cut-throats. How long did it take the good element in California, and in other portions of the West, to organize their vigilance committees? It was the work of a few hours; and it accomplished that, in as short a time, which would otherwise have been the work of a generation. The remedy of the vigilance committee had, in addition to its promptness, the recommendation of thoroughness, because in removing the lawless, it also destroyed their influence. It is the influence of the lawless here that is quite as damaging as their acts, and if you are to wait for them to die natural deaths, this influence will continue to extend. There is a certain percentage, in all communities, of those naturally lawless, or, rather, who have not the power to withstand lawlessness; and they join and adhere

to the bad element as naturally as barnacles form on the bottom of ships. We are cutting down the weeds in our fields to destroy their influence on the cotton. Apply the same remedy to the bad element here, and the vigilance committee will have done its work."

"Then you would be in favor of a vigilance committee here?"

"In the absence of the law, yes, if it were feasible. But if we were to suggest it, the lawless would raise the cry, 'It is an attack on the South.' A sectional quarrel would be the result; we should grace the halters intended for the guilty; and, under this sectional pretext, the murderers would walk forth so many heroes. So I don't think we shall care to undertake it, and thus the thing will have to wear out."

"It may wear us out in the meantime," Dobson said, with a sober face.

"Yes, the rebellion is only half-fought through. There are no armies in the field, but there are plenty of bush-whackers. It is when your enemy takes to the woods that the contest is tedious. It is no longer an attack directly on the government, because the South is now again under the government, but it is an attack upon its policy, all the more insidious for that fact. It is when the sinner, under the cloak of religion, gets into the church, that he can do the most harm. True, slavery no longer exists, as the rallying-point for the South. The slaves are free, and this mine of wealth is no longer here to be guarded. By the way, there is one point on which I can sympathize with the late slave-holder. Take any man in the North, and let him have a hundred notes for a thousand dollars apiece, secured by a mortgage—would he not feel like ripping out an oath against a party who, by some maneuver, should render these notes valueless? Each slave was like one of these notes."

"But I rather think the South was its own worst enemy,

in that her people brought on the war, which resulted in the loss of what you say is equivalent to so many notes for a given amount."

"Yes, that is true, but it is human nature to attribute one's financial losses to every thing but one's own fault. The Southern people, in their sense of perfection, could not be made to feel themselves their own executioners. Their slaves, standing in the light of so many bank-notes of value, were taken from them by the government. They fought to keep them. How, then, could they be charged with their loss? Such would be their mode of reasoning. The money view is, however, only one aspect —the other is that slavery had stood in the way of progress to this country, and the true victory of the war is that it no longer stands there. The overthrow of slavery, rightly viewed, is like that additional expense, frequently incurred, to make a great paying enterprise a success, and for the lack of which it would be a failure. So long as slavery existed the South was essentially a failure, as compared with other portions of this country. It was absolutely necessary that the slave-holders should contribute their slave capital to make it a success."

"That is another one of your theories, Mr. Harding. How much talk do you think you would have to expend before convincing one of these old slave-holders that slavery was a curse to the South, and that its removal would now cause it to prosper? Besides, as a matter of fact, the slaves are not a loss to the South. They are here still, only in another shape."

"I tried it, not long since, with one of them, and his answer was, 'Look at your fields. Do you call that prosperity? I do n't.' I could not say a word. Yes, you are of course right in saying the slaves are here still, but in a commercial sense they are lost. But we are spending a good deal of time in talk over our breakfast."

"Well, we must have something for our table, and as we hav n't much to eat, we can fill up with talk."

CHAPTER LIV.

MR. HARDING'S SICKNESS AND UMBRELLA THEORIES EXPLODED—COOL WATER DISCOVERED.

NOTWITHSTANDING Dobson's medical skill and close personal attention, there was no diminution in the number of our sick, while there was an alarming increase in the number of fatal cases. At one time we had three men dying in the hospital. It was a fearful experience. All night long adjoining our bed-room were the fevered moaning, the mad laugh, and, finally, the death-rattle—and then the lifeless forms of men who, but three days before, were among our active workers. Such fatality was demoralizing to all of us. Dobson's treatment was powerless to arrest what seemed to be ordinary ague, until it had passed into a low form of fever, attacking the brain, after which it was certainly fatal.

He finally decided to administer larger doses of quinine. Accordingly, for nearly two weeks, Dobson used at the rate of an ounce a day. When a case of chills was reported, he would fill the patient up, giving him thirty grains, in eight-grain doses, two hours apart, commencing as soon as the fever was over, and there would be no second chill. The third day the patient would be at work again. Then, on the seventh, fourteenth, and twenty-first days, he would again give thirty grains in the same way, thus generally preventing a recurrence. Dobson was in ecstacy over the happy effect of increased doses of quinine. The whole plantation had to be rationed with it regularly before breakfast, and it was seriously meditated to put it in the food along with the salt!

We soon reached the conclusion, arrived at by all swamp planters, that we could no more do without quinine than without meat or meal. Dobson said:

"You ought to take it, Mr. Harding, as steady diet."

"Where's the use of taking medicine, when one is well?" I asked.

"It is the ounce of prevention in your case, and the very best thing you can do is to get your system under its influence at once. If you will only look in the glass, you will see how yellow you are."

"Oh, my dear fellow, that is only a healthy tan, and comes of my not riding around under an umbrella. Don't you see how splendidly my will and umbrella theories are working?"

"Time enough to boast of that when the malarial season is over—you are not out of the woods yet. It's a long time before frost, and we'll have no healthy atmosphere until then. If you escape sickness, it will be miraculous."

Dobson's speech was prophetic, and this was my last day of boasting—the following one saw me down with a chill, my "will" and "umbrella" theories completely upset.

Dobson could not resist laughing at me between doses. Self-confident, I braved the elements, and the chill struck me a little before noon, while sitting on my horse, watching a squad of our hoe-hands. The sun would have easily pulled the thermometer up to 110°. First, I had a sense of heaviness, then came the chill, and there, in the torrid heat, I felt colder and more miserable than I had ever before felt in my life. Every bone in my body was aching, and my head throbbed.

"Mr. Harding, you's got a chill!" exclaimed Uncle Wash, "you'd better git to de quarters!"

It was half a mile there, and before I reached them my body became as heavy as lead. It seemed as if invisible forces were pulling my joints asunder. I tumbled off my

horse, and went all shivering to bed, where Dobson soon found me.

"Behold the result of will!" he said, as he uncovered my head to get a look.

"Make as much fun of me as you wish, General; I deserve it all for going out in a sun hot enough to roast an egg. I have defied fate, and here I am sprawling on the bed as my recompense. But can't you get me some cool water?" George did the best he could, but such water! It was tepid!

"Better hab some tea—dat'll make you sweat," said George.

"Well, some tea, then—any thing would be better than such horrid water."

If it had only been iced tea! But that was not possible; cream and lump sugar would have been the next best thing, but they were equally out of the question. So it was a cup of hot tea, sweetened with common, brown sugar—this to quench a raging thirst!

Nothing is done by halves here, so I had enough chill in that first paroxysm to have answered for a whole neighborhood anywhere else. But if the chill was severe, what of the fever, with nothing but tepid water to slake my thirst, and in an atmosphere so intensely hot as to threaten spontaneous combustion? There was thus a double fever for me.

I lost my mind for the afternoon, and Dobson said I did enough farming in my insanity, if it could have been made practical on the plantation, to have realized his estimate. By nine o'clock at night the fever passed, reason resumed mastery, and what was left of me, from the day's siege, was ready for Dobson's quinine treatment. Two days following I was again in the saddle, this time under an umbrella! Alas! how our theories are shattered when put to the test. Thereafter my predisposition was as strong for the umbrella as had hitherto been my prejudice against it. But I

still held to my "will" theory. There was thus a compromise, not a surrender.

Although performing my daily rounds, it soon became evident that my first chill had racked my system. Notwithstanding the shade of my umbrella, I wilted under the intense heat, as had not been my experience previously when exposed to the sun. My appetite was gone. I turned from our bean-soup with loathing, and yet there were absolutely no delicacies to be had. It was beans, salt meat and meal—so I crowded it down simply to sustain life.

An intense craving for milk came over me, to gratify which, my faithful George scoured the country for several days. He finally came back about ten o'clock in the morning of the third day, with a bottle of it, but when he poured out a glass for me to drink, I found it sour—and yet, he said it was fresh from the cows. Four miles' ride, in the hot sun, had done the work for it. We suffered most for drinking-water, and it was becoming a serious question whether we should not be forced to incur the expense of ice. The cry of our sick was for cold water, and my own thirst, in my recent attack, was fresh in my mind.

While still debating the question of ice, I happened over at the gin-house one day, when prowling around under it, I came upon one of the cement cisterns. Looking down into it, I could dimly see in the darkness the glistening of water; my thoughts were running on cool water, and at the very moment I was exceedingly thirsty. It occurred to me that there, in that cistern, so thoroughly shaded, I might find what I so much desired. Searching about I found an old can. It was my habit to carry a ball of twine in my pocket, when going to the field, to mend broken harness, etc. This served as a line, and I at once had a can full of this water at my thirsty lips. It was all my most eager hopes could have fancied it. It was cool, delightfully cool! I did not stop in my greed to examine it,

until I had quenched my thirst. Then I looked into the can and found the water to be as clear as crystal.

If I had been insured a full realization of the Dobson scheme, I could not have been happier than I was at that moment. I thought of our sick in the quarters, and how grateful it would be to their fevered lips; and then, after taking a third draught, I hurried off to give them the benefit of my discovery.

"I have found it! I have found it!" I cried to Dobson, as I rode up to our cabin, and saw him sitting on the gallery fighting the stripped-legged mosquitoes.

Dobson was in his shirt, drawers, and slippers, which gave the mosquitoes a fine range for operation. His going out upon the gallery, so clad, was a challenge to them, which they had not been slow to accept.

"Found what?" Dobson asked, between slaps, and with his usual deliberation.

"Found a well of cool water," I replied, dismounting.

"No?"

"Yes, indeed, cool water; I have just had my fill of it."

"Mr. Harding, you are crazy; where is this wonderful well?"

Then I told him what I have just related of my discovery, first dispatching George on my horse with a rope and bucket to fetch us a supply.

This water was a most grateful gift to us all, and Dobson said it was an important adjunct to the speedy recovery of our sick. "It is also an exceedingly important addition to our comfort, and will make us more content with our lot," I added.

But a disappointment awaited us. We soon found the water in our newly-discovered cistern to be hard, and, upon examination, remarked several cracks in the cement, showing that we were drinking "seepage water!" Thus the clear, cool water, which was so delightful to us, was, after all, unwholesome, and must be abandoned. The

morning after this unpleasant discovery, George filled our glasses at breakfast with a muddy-looking liquid.

"Where on earth did you get this water?" I asked.

"Out ob de Massip, sah."

I took a swallow of it, and found it pleasantly cool.

"Why, I did n't know the Mississippi river water was cool like this," I said, looking at George.

"Dat come from de bottom ob de ribber, sah," said George, roguishly.

"Out of the bottom of the river—how is that?"

"I jes went down to the ribber, last night, wid a jug, an' den sink de jug in de bottom ob de ribber all night, an' lef' it da', an' this is the 'sult."

"George, you 're a noble boy—you have found a way to give us cool, wholesome drinking water."

"Fank you sah," said George, grinning from ear to ear, "I 's glad you 's pleased."

"Yes, George, it is a fine service you have done us," Dobson said, after testing the water; "but instead of filling your jug with the muddy river water, fill it with our clear rain water, and cool that off."

"Certainly, sah."

So we had moderately cool drinking water after this, but it occasionally happened that we sent over to the gin-house for a bucketful of that delightfully cool water, even though it was "seepage" and unwholesome.

CHAPTER LV.

NEGRO CHURCHES.

STIMULATED, doubtless, by the weekly funeral services, there sprang up in our plantation-quarters, frequent religious meetings, running through the evenings of the week, bearing a slight resemblance to prayer-meetings, and culminating on Sunday with what was intended to be a grand preaching exercise. The prayer-meetings were usually plantation affairs, while the Sunday service embraced the neighborhood.

The "preachers" were generally of home talent—being the plantation laborers; and our own force soon developed a prolific crop. To their shame, be it said, they were not always, nor generally, our most reliable laborers. Several of these preachers had certificates, as crude as were their sermons, from some one signing himself as so-and-so, "bishop," or "presiding elder," indicating that there was a religious organization among the black people of the South, with headquarters at Vicksburg, New Orleans, and elsewhere. It was doubtless the result of the missionary work under the wing of our army.

While it was at once apparent that this church worship was of the crudest sort, it was yet religion to the black people, so to encourage it we set apart a cabin as a church, where our own people and those from other plantations, so inclined, could assemble at their pleasure to go through exercises which, with more civilized people, would almost be termed blasphemous.

These meetings had the features of an Indian war dance. Seeing them for the first time the exclamation would be, "What sacrilege!"—and yet, upon closer observation, it

was to be seen that there was a vein of religion running through the service which education, experience, and time would soften and sober into proper church worship. It was scarcely less crude than our attempt to work the negroes as free laborers, or than their notions of their duties and responsibilities as free citizens. It was the A B C period that we were passing through, viewed in whatever aspect.

The following specimens, taken at the time from our plantation meetings, will give the reader an idea of their character. Here is a sermon, with the interruptions just as they occurred:

"Brethering, I will make onto you a few scatterin' 'marks dis mornin'"—[voice from the congregation, "Oh, yes,"]—"'bout how de Lo'd came into dis wo'ld fur to seek an' fin' dat w'at wus los'"—[another voice, "Yes, brudder"]—"an' how I wa' comin' long de ro'ds dis mornin'"——["True, Lo'd"]—"dah wur two sinnahs sittin' in de do' ob de house"—["Yes, Lo'd, dat 's so"—groan]—"dey wur a talkin' 'bout de bressed Lo'd"—["Yes, Jesus"]—dat de devine speret come to dem"—["Dat 's all so, brudder,"]—"in dere dreams by night"—["Yes, Lo'd"]—(at this stage the negro women became so excited that they commenced stamping their feet, accompanied by a swaying of their bodies and a humming sound proceeding from their closed lips; this was continued during most of the service, only increasing as the excitement increased)—"an' revealed onto dem"—["Bres me, Lo'd,"]—"dat dey would be tree da'k days"—["Lo'd, sabe my soul"]—"when all dat did n't sarve de Lo'd would be dammed to die"—["Lo'd, deliber me"].—"He will smite dem" [striking the desk with his fist] "to de yearth. Sinnahs, come, do come an' be saved, or you 'll be dammed."

Here an awful scream was heard, followed by a shout from a "sister," who had been taken with what they term the "power." "I lubs de Lo'd," she cried; "oh, Jesus,

sabe me! oh! oh! oh!" and so on for sometime, smiting the air with her fists—during which time she was held up by two "sisters," until overcome by excitement she fell back in their arms exhausted.

A brother sprang up and gave out a line, and the excitement increased as they all sang, the brothers one line, the sisters the next:

Brothers. "I seed one upon a tree."
Sisters. "Gone to meet my sistahs in de mornin'."
Brothers. "I seed him an' he seed me."
Sisters. "Gone to meet my sistahs in de mornin'."
Brothers. "I lub him as I see him dere."
Sisters. "Gone to meet my sistahs in de mornin'."
Brothers. "Wid his pretty face an' shiney ha'r."
Sisters. "Gone to meet," etc.

While the singing proceeded the preacher walked up and down the platform, greatly excited.

"Come, oh, you sinnahs, to de Lo'd," he cried.

"I 's come," some one screamed in reply.

"He opens his pow'ful arms to you; kin you refuse?" yelled out the preacher.

"I 's jumped squar' into dem," an excited sister replies, with a great leap.

This was the climax. The whole church was in an uproar—some shouting, some exhorting, others giving out hymns. There were three of what they called their "deckons" (deacons) standing under the pulpit—each lining off hymns at the same time—and so absorbed were they that they did n't appear to notice that no one joined them in their singing. In the meantime what they termed the "sinnahs" were grouped in the rear of the church, or just outside the door. Those on the inside indulged in more or less laughter and loud talk, while those on the outside were so noisy as to seriously annoy the worshipers. An officer was stationed at the door to enforce quiet; when the outsiders would become especially boisterous, he would

sing out to them: "De Lo'd won't bress you—heah me!" The sinners would shout in reply, "Yes, brudder, dat 's so." At which the door-keeper would roll his eyes and groan, only to reappear and to be freshly shocked at each fresh outbreak.

There was another officer moving around inside, who told me his duty was, "To keep down de sinnahs inside." He, more discreet than the one who looked after the outsiders with such poor results, was provided with a large club, knotty at the end, with which he rapped the noisy ones over the shins into silence. "You 'll be pow'ful burnt some day—better listen to de preacher an' be sabed," he would frequently add. This officer wore red stripes down the legs of his pantaloons, and strutted around like a peacock.

There was still another officer, whose duty was to water the congregation at stated intervals. For this purpose a gourd and bucket were furnished, and the water was passed around from seat to seat.

On one occasion a preacher came up from New Orleans, which was the signal for an immense Sunday attendance—the grape-vine telegraph being put to work to "norate" his arrival. He was a wise-looking negro, and could read hesitatingly. Announcing the text he called upon "Deckon 'Nias" to respond to it, after which came "Deckon Ross." The latter was very tedious in his remarks, which occupied an hour—failing to rouse the congregation in the least. The New Orleans minister then rose to close the sermon. He said:

"De 'marks ob Brudder 'Nias were berry good. Dey teched de pint 'zackly—I highly 'proves ob dem. It is jis de kind ob preachin' dat'll make de sinnahs groan and de Christians shout. All you dat is 'appy wid de Lord will 'joice at de sound ob his words, an' de mis'able sinnahs 'll shake when dey hears de awful sound. Brudder Ross war sleepy in his 'marks—not fo'cible, like Brudder 'Nias," (at

which compliment "Brudder 'Nias" was heard to clear his throat—while "Brudder Ross" looked very much crest-fallen). "Brudder Ross had better read his Bible mo'."

Then "Deckon Gus" rose and said: "Let us sing." Pointing his long, bony fingers out toward the door, where the "sinnahs" were huddled, he started up, and was joined by the congregation:

"You see dem chil'ens, yonder?
You tink dey doin' well;
But when you comes to fin' out,
Chil'ens, dey 's hangin' ober hell.

Chorus.—"Dey 's hangin' ober hell,
Dey 's hangin' ober hell,
But when you comes to fin' out,
Chil'ens, dey 's hangin' ober hell."

While they were yet singing, thunder was heard, whereupon some of the sisters from adjoining plantations proceeded to say good-bye to the Hebron sisters. This movement bade fair to close the meeting, and it seemed to worry the New Orleans preacher. He called out:

"Sistahs, thunder was made by de Lo'd you worships, an' heah you is runnin' way from it—be not afraid; ef your faith is in God, stay."—But it was a stampede, and the meeting ended without any attempt at a doxology.

At another time, in the midst of a great excitement, "Sister Reah" undertook the conversion of "Aaron," who had the reputation of being a great sinner. She got her arms around his neck, and commenced exhorting.

"O, Brudder Aaron, come to de Lo'd,"—kissing him,—"be converted,"—another kiss; "come into de folds ob Jesus—he will bress you,"—kisses.

"Yes, sistah."

"You wus made fo' de Lo'd, an' not fo' de debil."

"Dat's so, my sistah."

"Brudder Aaron, pray."
"I can't, Sistah Reah."
"Try."
"I hab tried."

Then "Sister Reah" rushed up to the pulpit, and jumping up and down, clapping her hands, she exclaimed: "Jesus, come to Brudder Aaron; make him one ob de flock," and then the "power" struck her, and she was seized by two "sisters,"—who held her down—she all the time throwing out her arms wildly, beseeching for "Brudder Aaron," until she became speechless, and was carried off in a swoon. Whereupon one of the deacons started up:

"Did n' your conscience nebber tell you,
Did n' your conscience nebber tell you,
Did n' your conscience nebber tell you,
To go in de valley an' pray?"

A "sister" answered back:

"Oh, no, I aint ashamed,
Oh, no, I aint ashamed,
Oh, no, I aint ashamed,
To go in de valley an' pray."

I asked Aunt Clara (one of the most active of the "sisters") "what is the denomination of your church?"

She looked at me with an expression of pity for my ignorance, heaved a sigh, and answered:

"We's de ha'd-headed Baptis', chile; yes, we's ha'd fo' de Lo'd."

One day I was standing in the church door, when all of a sudden the excitement sprang up—some shouting, some singing, some praying. The outburst was unexpected to me, and seemed ludicrous, and I smiled, when Clara, who, it seems, had been watching me closely, detected me smiling. She came over to me at once.

"In de day ob judgment, when Gabriel blows his mighty

ho'n, callin' both de jest and de onjest to 'demption, den you'll want what you is now laughin' at—heah me!"

"What do you mean, Aunt Clara?"

I means all dis shoutin' an' singin'. It'll take it all to rush you into hebben."

"I wont smile any more then, Clara."

"Well, honey, I hopes you'll 'member dat promise."

The following hymn, and what was called the "doxollum," closed this meeting:

Brothers. "When Israel was in Egyp's land—"
Sisters. "Let my people go."
Brothers. "So hard oppressed they could n't stand—"
Sisters. "Let my people go."
Chorus. "Then go down, Moses,
Away down to Egyp's land;
Tell King Pharaoh
To let my people go."

They occasionally had what they called "'zamination meetins"—devoted to the giving of their experiences. "Br. 'Lias" gave his as follows: "Brudders an' sistahs, when I was a layin' in my bed by night de speret ob de Lo'd came, an' stannin by my bed-side I seed a dream. On de udder side ob Jording dah was de angel ob de Lo'd, and he beckoned to me. Says he, 'Come, come, oh, come, 'Lias, come,' an' my head was all bedizzy like, and I begin to tremble; an' I kep' on lookin' dah, 'til de scene was broked into, an' on his fiery throne sat de Lo'd, and he says, 'Come, come, oh, come, 'Lias, an' be one of my redempted sperets;' an' den I begin to believe"—["Ugh," one exclaimed].—"De Lo'd was too strong"—["He is so," exclaimed another]—"an' de debbil begin to go out ob me"—["Did so"]—"an' de Lo'd crawled in, an' oh, I was so happy wid de Lo'd"—["I knows it"].—Befo' I was de awfullest sinnah eber was, but now, by de grace ob de Lo'd, I 's redempted now—bo'n agin—hab de speret in me, an' is happy." Then "Br.

'Lias" received the congratulations of the congregation —each one shaking his hand.

A white face was a restraint to them. I have looked in upon them when their service was at fever-heat—the preacher fairly raving with excitement, the congregation singing, shouting, praying, dancing; when the preacher would happen to glance toward the door and espy me, it would cool him instantly, and in the shortest space the church would be quiet—all life gone out of it.

The Sabbath-school, under my management, was a failure. It was too tame an affair to suit their fiery feelings. Evidently our sober Sabbath-school service was quite as strange to them as was their religious service to me. It was not "church" to them unless they could "wallow wid Jesus," unobserved by a white face. Even the presence of the New Orleans preacher, with his shining black suit, well-combed hair, reading the Bible, was a restraint, and was the reason why "Br. Ross" did not wake the church up, as was his wont. What they luxuriated in was their own home talent.

Nothing excited the negroes so much in their meetings as when their speakers would weave in reminiscences of their bondage. There was one of their number—Uncle Harrison, as we called him—who used to delight in this, and who was a man of considerable force. The following is one of his efforts:

"De wages ob sin is death. Dat 's God's saying. Many ob you hab felt dat death 's coming-on out on de old plantation. When you felt it coming on den you wanted to go to Christ. But de driver's cry was heard, 'Go to work.' But you did n't care for him, nor de whip, nor de fetters, ef de hebbenly life could only come into your soul. In some dark place you would go and pray—an' de darker de better—ef de Lord would come just dat once; and when he come you run to de cotton-field and worked all day, and did n't care for de lashes on de bare back which

you received because you stayed so long in prayer. What joy den followed! 'Take all I hab,' you said, 'but give me dis new life.' It was dis dat propped you up in dem black days ob bondage. When de hebbenly gift was yours you fear'd no harm. De old master might swear, and de old driver might flog—but dere was peace and joy within."

As may be imagined this stirred up his congregation wonderfully. He was frequently interrupted by devout exclamations, shouting, and bursts of religious frenzy from his hearers. So much so, that it was with difficulty I could take down his words as I stood concealed under the window.

Here is a sermon which I noted down upon another occasion:

"Good many times we spent de long night in praar, an' as de little stars stopped dar twinkle, and de day-break come, we crep' into de fiel' to work all day wid de plow and de hoe, an' eat de old bacon an' corn. But de soul had rest, an' libbed on honey an' de honey-comb. But, God bress you, chill'en, dem days am passed an' gone; de God ob Moses hab taken off de fetters, and soul an' body am free. I hab walked dis road myself wid dese yer feet, and at de broke ob day heard de whip crack, de bell ring, an' de driver's call, an' when I rolled out ob my little crib felt dat I would die dat day. But Jesus talked wid me, an' said, 'Go out once mo', an' I will be wid you.'"

Here is another specimen:

"De debil toke Presi*dent* Linkum up into a high mountain, an' showed him all the powers he would gib him ef he 'de on'y fall down an' worship him. But de kind ole man, de sabior ob dis people, on'y winked at de tempter, an' said, 'I can 't see it.' But when de debil kep' on a-temptin', an' 'gan to quote de texes ob de constution ober to mislead him, den de Presi*dent* riz up full height, an'

put him fru de manuel: 'Tree paces to de raar. Right 'bout face—march,' an' de debil went on de double-quick."

CHAPTER LVI.

COMFORTS AND DISCOMFORTS.

My "will" theory was shortly to be put to a severe test. The seventh day after my first chill I took thirty grains of quinine, and so escaped the second paroxysm. Then, absorbed with my duties, I grew careless, and when the fourteen days came around, neglected the medicine, which resulted in my having the second chill—both chill and fever being more protracted than the first; the latter so much so that I could not get myself sufficiently under the influence of quinine to prevent my chill coming on again the next day. During both days I vomited profusely; the heat seemed excessive; my diet was the rudest—if, indeed, any thing would have tempted me—and I seemed rapidly approaching the state of a confirmed invalid.

The only thing I actually enjoyed was George's jug of cooled rain-water. He was a willing soul, devotedly attached to me, and all hours of the day and night saw him hastening to and from the river, so as to keep me always supplied with the freshest draughts of water. I had only to look into a glass to see that I was but the ghost of my former self. What I had boasted of to Dobson as being but "healthy tan," was a good deal more than skin-deep—it was, in fact, the result of a system gorged with bile, and there was really but very little tan about it. Dobson was worried at my condition.

"There is no special danger of fatal results," he said. "The fear is that your chills will become chronic. Saturated, as your system now is, with malaria, any trifling ex-

posure, such as sitting in a draught, night air, the heat of the sun, is liable to throw you into a chill. Each additional chill renders you still more liable to others. By-and-by quinine will lose its effect, after which the remedies are arsenic, frost, a change of climate, and, above all, time."

"Ah, General, that is the dark side of the picture. The bright side is—I will come out stronger on the 'will,' and so pull through; of course, in the meantime taking good care of myself. With a condition favorable to chills, I may occasionally have one, now that they have got a start with me, but I am bound they shall be few and far between."

"Well, there is nothing like being hopeful, Mr. Harding—which you certainly are. You may not have another chill, but you are likely to have many—I hope for the former case, but fear the latter."

If some features of the weather were not conducive to health, they were to comfort. Notwithstanding the heat of the day, the nights were always cool. This was said to be the result of breezes from off the Gulf of Mexico—though, indeed, these breezes fortunately were not confined to the season of night; except for an hour or so before sunrise until seven in the morning, and again for about the same time before and after sun-set, they were unceasing. These continuous breezes served to break the rays of the sun, thus greatly mitigating their force. I have said these breezes were unceasing except during the hours stated; and this was a wise dispensation of Providence, as but for them, while people might exist here, it would be impossible to endure the labor necessary to produce a crop—not that there was such a high degree of heat; it was the long continuance of the heated term, from May until October, which was said to be so enervating. During the hottest portion of the season I noted the thermometer every day for a period of three weeks, and at meridian it ranged from 88° to 90°—while at nine o'clock in the evening of the the same days it was down to 75° and 70°. At the same

period the thermometer was ranging in Cincinnati from 95° to 98°, with intensely hot nights. Thus, while our friends in the North were panting for a breath of cool night air, we slept under about the same coverings we had found necessary before the hot weather set in. Protected from mosquitoes and all other insects under our bars, with such a temperature as I have described, after the labors and vexations of the day—and when not disturbed by our sick—our sleep was sweet, and we woke in the morning thoroughly refreshed. For comfort and health we changed our clothes three times each day: in the early morning wearing woolen, in the heat of the day as little clothing as possible, and in the evening again woolen. The peculiarity of the heat was that it was not depressing—there was no gasping for breath. It was a heat that produced profuse perspiration while sitting in one's room in the shade. Even with the most violent exercise, during the hottest weather in the North, one has often a dry skin. I well remembered the suffocating sensations of that pent-up heat. Here, without an effort, the perspiration would ooze from every pore in my body, setting me all in a glow.

With doors and windows wide open, as was the custom, the incessant breezes swept through our cabin, making weights necessary to prevent our papers from being blown about. Never was there the slightest need to go in search of a breeze; out of doors one was always fanning you. Look across the fields, and there would be the ceaseless flutter of leaf on tree and bush and cotton-stalk; open a window or door, and there it was on the outside, ready to enter—in the middle of the day with a more or less heated breath, at night deliciously cool.

Before morning the breeze came laden with moisture—the falling dew—amounting almost to a slight shower: enough, at any rate, to dampen the dust in the road, and cause vegetation to glisten with drops of water, as if it had been sprinkled with a watering-pot, and to look up

full of renewed life. This served to explain why vegetation could exist, as it frequently had to for a considerable time here, without a drop of rain. Each nightly dew-fall was itself a shower. Cotton, I may here remark, does not draw its moisture in this way—its long straight tap-root burrowing into the ground is the tube through which it comes; and yet even cotton—this sun-plant, as it has been called—plainly derived new vigor from this nightly bath, which gave it courage and strength to look the sun square in the face from its rising to its setting.

There was then, as I have noted, a daily change in the thermometer from 90° at noon to 70° at midnight—a change almost as regular as clock-work. It was thus a steam-bath, followed by its opposite. Great care was necessary to save the system from the shock incident to such changes; hence the woolen clothing, mornings and evenings, with fire on the hearth, and the absence of clothes during the heat of the day. Such extremes could not be wholesome, and were doubtless a fruitful cause of sickness.

Laying aside all prejudice, we had to acknowledge that, with proper surroundings, this was not the most unpleasant country in the world. Our experience of it was not a fair test. Here we were in the overseer's cabin, or rather in a small section of it—because the cabin was at once store-room, hospital, office, and living-room. We had not a cow to give us milk; no garden; no poultry; no sheep from which we could draw an occasional mutton or spring lamb; no calves for veal—only some staggering, scrawny Texas beeves; nothing else to eat but the provisions of our store-room, which had traveled all the way from Cincinnati.

What sort of farming was this of ours, any how? Of course our cabin discomforts were unavoidable, until we could build a house to live in. True, we had made an effort toward a garden, but that it was a complete failure was not for the reason that all kinds of garden vegetables

did not grow luxuriously here, under ordinary circumstances, but because we had taken a little piece from our great weed-patch of a plantation, and, with no more preparation than should have been given to ground that was under a high state of cultivation, had expected a good garden.

Sheep and milch cows could be had for the money in either the Cincinnati or St. Louis markets. Every steamboat from the up-country—all of them passing our door, of course—brought down coops upon coops of poultry. Cows and sheep and poultry throve here—as what did not? But all these required money for their purchase, with care and proper treatment afterward.

Our bayous were full of turtles—soft-shells, many of them, too. There they lay in great numbers, all day long, sunning themselves on the logs. There was a very simple way to catch them. Take a shoe-box, bore a hole in each upper corner of one side; run a rope through each hole; tie stones—or rather old iron or bricks, since we have no stones—to the ends of the rope; put weights enough in the box to sink it, and then sink it on the outer side of a log on which the turtles congregate; throw the ropes, with the weights attached, over the side of the log towards you—thus the box is held close up to the log, under the water, and of course invisible. Then go away and let the turtles come up on the log to sun themselves—after which all you have to do is to pass along the banks of the bayou, scare the turtles, and they drop off the log on the opposite side into your box, and you have them caged—half a dozen at a time. In this way we might have had turtle-soup to alternate with the bean-soup of which we were so tired, to say nothing of turtle-steak. The woods, moreover, were full of game, to be had for the hunting.

Thus it was not because the soil would not produce, or that the climate was not congenial, that we were suffering for lack of fresh vegetables and meats; and it was not the

fault of the country itself, but rather the fault of its condition and of our own shortcomings.

The fact is, all our energies were bent in the direction of cotton. We had started under great disadvantages, the principal of which was our own ignorance of the business; we had encountered obstacles at every turn; our cotton was still in the grass—our work was driving us; we had not a moment of time to secure such of the creature comforts as were within our grasp. To catch up with our work was our all-absorbing struggle—to make our grand weed-patch a productive cotton plantation in the year 1866 was our constant aim.

With a comfortable house on the Hebron plantation, having broad galleries surrounding it to catch the breezes, and upon which to swing a hammock; with garden and poultry, with wild game, and such other comforts as the country was capable of producing or supporting; with our continuous breezes and cool nights, bringing gloriously refreshing sleep;—with all these, we used to say that we thought we should not greatly mind the insects, or the miasma, or our inhospitable surroundings; and with a good cotton prospect in view, our feelings toward the country would be all that we had fondly imagined they should be.

While on the subject of comforts and discomforts I will mention that one of the former, after a day of heat and its accompanying perspiration, was a bath, with water from our cistern. The attendant discomfort was the mosquitoes, swarming at the bed-time hour—the time for the bath. George would first bring in the bath-tub, with its water. In order to do this, he had to move some of our chairs temporarily out upon the gallery, and then, that I might take my bath in any sort of peace, he had to fight away the hungry mosquitoes with a feather duster. Notwithstanding he was zealous and active, it was impossible for him to at once protect all the exposed parts. Still more difficult was it during the wiping process, with my body entirely ex-

posed. As a result, my bath was a battle, at which I had to confess myself a good deal worsted. The water cooled off and freshened me—but I would be fretted, my body smarting in many parts, and my blood inflamed with the bites. I had, as a consequence, to abandon the evening bath, and bathe in the morning, while the mosquitoes were napping, instead. But this evidently worried George, since he knew the evening bath was a great luxury to me. He hammered and worked away, at odd spells, for a day or two, on a funny-looking frame, which he was making up of barrel-hoops. Then he asked me for a mosquito-bar, which he rigged over the frame. He pretended that he was fixing a screen for himself to sleep under. But when bed-time came, he commenced moving some chairs out on the gallery—then he brought the bath-tub in—then the frame, which fitted nicely over the bath-tub—when it was all plain: my devoted servant had contrived this plan, which would enable me to resume my nightly bath, shielded from the mosquitoes. It was a complete success, and, thus securely housed, I could bathe at leisure—rather enjoying the snarl of the mosquitoes as they beat themselves against my cage. But more than half the pleasure was to see George's delight, at having fixed me up so nicely, and, at the same time, completely outwitted our common enemy, the mosquito. He danced about on the gallery the first night, talking to the swarming insects:

"I jes double dar you to go in dar now an' bite de boss. Dis nigger is jes de chile to spile your pesterin' people while dey's takin' a wash. Don't come around heah agin, caze you wont git nary nudder bite off de boss or de General dis year."

To make it perfectly fair General Dobson and myself used to draw straws to decide who should take the first bath.

CHAPTER LVII.

WATER—MULES—MAKING LOVE.

The Fourth of July was near at hand, and yet very much of our cotton was still choked with grass. It would be long after the anniversary of Independence Day before our crop would be clean, though, all the same, we should have to celebrate it, and drink our barrel of beer. Our laborers were doing their best, considering the funerals and sickness, but, matted as our fields were with Bermuda, crop grasses, and weed-growths, it was tedious and toilsome work, and, after all, there was so little accomplished! Laborers and teams would come in from the field at night worn out with pulling and tugging at the plow and hoe. There was little singing of plantation melodies as the lines of hands came straggling in from the fields, after the day's work, because the battle with the weeds had taken all the music out of them. Each plow-hand mounted his or her tired mule for a ride in from the field, and then, single-file, they all went crawling off to the mule stable, the very picture of a worn-out cavalcade. Before quitting-time at night the mules would become "poky" in the furrow from the day's tough pulling. The men and women would have to shout themselves hoarse, and ply whip and plow-line to keep them moving at all. Once in a while one would give out entirely and stand in his tracks, ears lying back on his head, tail between his legs, taking whip, plow-line and imprecation from his driver, with an occasional kick of the hind legs when the lash-string stung particularly sharp, but never moving until the traces were unhooked, and he was taken to the ditch-bank for a little rest,

when his ears would go up, and his tail would come out from between his hind legs, as much as to say, "I have conquered; now I will quit my stubbornness."

It was no uncommon thing for men to grow so heated that they would shed one after another of their garments, until finally they would only have left on them hat, shirt, and shoes, and then such a one would usually start up some outlandish melody, making the air ring with music, at once the picture of the veritable Sambo.

The women usually had a string about them, and when they went to the field they would tie up their clothes around their hips so as to expose themselves to their knees. It was not an uncommon vanity for them to wear stockings with gay stripes, and with the pretty ones, thus rigged for work, it was decidedly a picturesque spectacle. Once in the quarters, the string was untied, and the clothes were allowed to drop.

There was one feature about the negroes' consumption of water that was novel. Particular about the kind they drank, they were indifferent as to its temperature. If it was rain or river water, it was all right. These were children of nature, and here also was proof that the use of cold water is a cultivated taste. With their bodies heated by their toil, they could not have drank cold water of the same quantity without a serious shock to their systems. The temperature of the water they did drink produced no such shock. A certain flow of perspiration was necessary for health—this could only be secured through copious draughts of water of such temperature as would not shock the system, and thus check the perspiration. Uncle Wash said:

"Ef you puts col' water in a he't-up biler, it is mighty apt to bust. A darkey, when he 's at work, dese hot days, is jes like a he't-up biler, an' ef you do n't want to 'stroy him keep de col' water away. We has to hab de

sweat, jes as de biler has to hab de steam; hit takes he't-up water to make hit."

While the plowing of land for cotton requires two mules, its cultivation requires but a single one. A particular mule was allotted to each one of our plow-hands. There is a certain congeniality between a negro and a mule—they soon learn each other's ways. It was common for each hand to speak of the mule with which it was his task to work as his own, and in many cases they became inordinately fond of their mules, treating them far better than they did themselves.

Mane and tail were kept well roached, and the animal was always thoroughly groomed; and, although the stock-yard man had charge of the feeding and watering, they would insist on themselves seeing that their "kreeter" was watered and fed, frequently standing guard at the feed-trough, when hungry themselves, to see that no other "pesky" mule got the "grub" allotted to their own. No animal responds so promptly to proper attention as a mule, and consequently this devotion gave those who practiced it sleek, fat animals. Proudly would such careful ones sit upon their mules as they rode to and from the field. Let some child or tired auntie ask to get up behind and ride to the quarters, and there would be the prompt, angry response:

"No, sa', yu can 't ride on dis yer mule; he aint gwyne to tote nary 'nudder soul but dis chile, plum pintedly."

"Unk Bob, please, sa', le'm me ride on ole Pete's back a'hind you."

"Now, Sis Sal, you knows mighty well dis mule wont carry double."

The fact was, Uncle Bob could not say no squarely, so tender-hearted was he. Loving his mule as he did, he frequently got out of such requests to double up, by teaching him to kick up violently with the second person on his

back, and so was enabled truthfully to give the answer above.

But "Sister Sal" did not believe it—so she said:

"Git out, Unk Bob, you knows dey aint a word of truf in dat,—ole Pete wont carry double! Go long now, Unk Bob, wid yer story-tellin'."

"Well, come on, Sis' Sal, and try him."

Pete stood perfectly quiet until tired "Sister Sal" got firmly in her seat, and was just about to put her arms around Uncle Bob's waist, so as to hold on, when, at a signal which he understood, from his master, he reared up behind, shied off suddenly to the left, and there lay "Sister Sal" sprawling in the dust.

"Dar now, Sis' Sal, I recken you 'll belieb unk Bob nex' time."

"Mules is jes like white folks, you can't place any 'pendance in 'em," Sal muttered, as she picked herself out of the dust, amid the jeers and laughter of the hoe-gang.

Nobody ever asked uncle Bob to ride on behind him after that.

Some of the men were more careful of their mules than they were of their wives, and more careful of themselves than either, for they would mount them at night and ride off to the quarters, leaving their tired wives to follow behind on foot, though there was here and there a negro with gallantry enough to take on behind him his weary spouse, and thus save her sometimes a mile's walk.

Aunt Milly, the wife of Uncle Wash, who was one of the plow-hands, always looked out for him and saw that he got a ride in, only, as it was her mule, "de ole man," as she called him, had to get on behind.

"Sit up dar, Milly; sit up dar," I once heard Uncle Wash exclaim. "I declar' dis mule is so short dere aint room for two on her back." Aunt Milly's mule was "short-coupled, pony-built," and Wash said what was true, but her mistress was prompt to resent any insinua-

tion against her beast, even though it came from her husband.

"Git out dar, ole man," she replied, "dis mule's done pulled fru de 'Mudah an' crap-grass, so her back 's all drawed up. Spec a mule to be humpin' from sun-up to sun-down," she added with disdain, "an' den hab a long back. De wunder is dat dis mule's got any back 't all—ef da 's much mo' of dis so't of pullin' de mule's back 'll be pulled into her shoulders or rump."

"Shut up dar, Milly; I did n't mean no 'sult to yo' mule."

There were a number of the women who were in the market—that is, they had neither married nor permanently "took-up" with any of the men. There was constant love-making between them and negro men in like condition. These women were more highly favored than their married sisters, for they could always get, for the asking, a ride home from the field up behind some of their fellows, and frequently the invitation was extended to them. It furnished a double opportunity—for rest and for love making.

The hoe-gang furnished another opportunity for love making. The lovers would have adjoining rows; sometimes it was the man, sometimes it was the woman, who was the most expeditious with the hoe—in either case the one would help the other out. I have seen negro men so anxious to show their devotion, that they would hoe half the rows of the objects of their affection in addition to their own. Uncle Wash had a keen eye for this sort of thing, and would soon detect it.

"Hurry up da, gal; fotch up dat row libely, now, nigger. Git off dat nigger's row, 'Lias, an' luff her do her own hoein'. Jis stop dat lub-doin, now, heah me!" would ring out from Wash.

In the days of slavery, a very large percentage of the women almost constantly had nursing children. Such was

not the case now. During the entire year, there was but one nursing babe on the Hebron plantation, and it was brought to the place with the Vicksburg force, so there was not a birth to chronicle; and yet, with our force, in old times, there would have been at least twenty-five.

With no increase, and with such a fearful mortality in our force—if our plantation was an index to the general situation, as it was, no doubt—it seemed that the present generation of negroes would be the end of the race as a power in this country, and that such would be the fact was the opinion of many earnest thinkers among those who had an opportunity to judge.

There being, then, no children, the nursing feature, which General Hampson had dwelt on at such length when he showed us Hebron, was entirely absent.

CHAPTER LVIII.

GRIEVANCES.

As these pages have already shown, our reception was the opposite of what it ought to have been. There was the deception which Captain Tyler, the wharf-boat-man, had practiced on us with respect to the landing of our freight; the luring away of the Hebron negroes, during our absence to procure our outfit; the failure of Colonel Ditston to keep his contract to furnish us our seed for planting; the overcharge on the part of our landlord of two hundred dollars rent for his house; the response of Mrs. Harding's neighbors when Jane was sent over to borrow a coffee-mill and a coal of fire; the dropping down

of veils, turning away of faces, and pulling up of skirts, when passing us; the insulting message which the saw-mill man had sent us; the blow which had been administered to Percy Layton; the long, black chapter of murders by the "mischievous boys" of the village; the stampeding of negro immigration—and so on for quantity.

Long since had the solemn conviction forced itself upon us, that there was scarcely any sign of a sentiment in our favor. The crushing fact stood out in our pathway, that we were as much in the enemy's country as were our soldiers during the war—the difference being that we were here unprotected and almost alone, while our soldiers had the army with them. The battles were over, it was true, but, instead of white-winged peace, bushwhacking was the order.

Month after month of this weary year rolled by, and each succeeding one saw the feeling against us more bitter, more intense. President Johnson's policy was daily increasing the fire in the Southern heart. First, it was not so much expressed in their words as in their looks. Then came feeble utterances against the North and Northern people. Louder and louder grew these utterances. Human blood began again to redden Southern soil, and it was generally loyal human blood.

The time came when our neighbors seemed to think that every one must take sides. Accordingly, one morning, while assisting to make some repairs on our grist-mill, a man rode up, whom I recognized as a resident of the village. As he dismounted, his short, sacque coat-tail flew up, and there, exposed to full view, was a huge navy revolver. He introduced the object of his visit softly, but at once, saying:

"I was riding by, and thought I would stop and see how you stand on the political questions of the day. Do you indorse Andy Johnson's policy?" I replied, "We came here for purposes of farming, not with any intention to

participate in politics—in fact, with a fixed determination not to do so. General Dobson had a profession, and I was in business, where we came from. Neither of us were politicians there. We have shown our friendly feeling toward the South by the purchase of this plantation and coming here to live. In the North the few are politicians—a great many of the people take scarcely enough interest in politics to vote unless there is some special issue at stake."

"That's just what's the matter here now. There *is* a a special issue. The South lost in the war. Andy Johnson 's come to our rescue. We've all got to take sides for or agin the policy. We must know who our friends are, and who are our enemies."

"You must excuse me, sir. I can't express an opinion on the limited information before me. Since coming here I have seen or read but few papers, and do not feel at all posted. The fact is, I have been so absorbed in the plantation that I feel I scarcely know any thing else, and, if you are to judge by the sorry outlook, you will say that I don't know very much of this." The latter was added laughingly, and with a view of changing the subject. But as well try to change the current of the Mississippi. My visitor might have been diverted by an invitation to take a drink, but I had nothing except the cool water under the gin. I offered him this, and he drank it, heating it up first, however, from the contents of a flask, which he drew from his coat-pocket. Then he rode off, with an ugly look on his face, which boded mischief to us.

A few days later we received a file of papers from the North, containing accounts of horrible murders, in the South, of new-comers like ourselves. Just across the river from us a late Federal general had been fatally shot, while sitting in his door at night, cooling off after the heat and labor of the day. Some distance above us three Northern men were working a plantation together. One morning, before

day, while all were asleep, four men, disguised by blacking their faces, and other means, broke into their house, woke the gentlemen, demanding their money and arms. They being entirely helpless, their arms were given up, and a trunk, containing about three thousand dollars, was pointed out. The robbers immediately forced it, secured the prize, and then proceeded to rifle the men's pockets, and pick up whatever valuables they could find. Two of them left the house, and with another party of ruffians entered the stable, and wantonly killed the animals therein. The negro laborers were awakened by the firing, and most of them having served in the army, and having retained their arms, started for the stable. The robbers fired on them and killed five; the remaining negroes returned the fire, and retreated to their quarters. The band then set fire to the stable, which, with the cotton-gin, was destroyed. The murderers then moved in a body to the woods. In the morning, after burying the murdered negroes, the planters, with their hands, followed the assassins; but satisfied, by the number of their tracks, that they could not cope with so many, they soon returned to the plantation.

In Georgia a negro was fastened to a stake, faggots were piled around him, and he was roasted to death.

Even in the enlightened city of New Orleans, a young lawyer, from the North, was notified to leave, shortly after his location there, simply because he had the courage to express what were called Northern sentiments.

From these, and other instances given, it was plain to be seen that the "mischievous boys" were at work in more places than one in the South. The same mail which brought this file of papers also brought letters from friends expressing apprehension for our personal safety. We laughed at their fears, as we read their letters; still they must have impressed us.

The following morning I was at the blacksmith-shop, superintending some repairs, when, chancing to look down

the front road, I espied about half a mile off a party of horsemen coming directly toward us, and traveling at a rapid gait. As a gust of wind blew the cloud of dust away, which partially enveloped them, I made out at least a dozen in the party.

The first thought I had was of the numerous murders of new-comers in the South, and then came the further thought that this was to be an attack upon us. Our time had come at last. The apprehensions expressed in the letters, which we had laughed at, were well grounded. Without saying a word to either the blacksmith or carpenter, I walked across the road, and at once entered our cabin. Dobson had just gotten up, and, in his slippers and night-shirt, was shaving himself.

"General," I said, "there is a party of horsemen coming up the road. It looks suspicious. May be they are friends, but you know we never receive any white friends, and I fear they are not. Don't you think we had best prepare ourselves for a possible attack?"

"Yes, I think so," he replied deliberately; then he walked deliberately to the door, looking down the road, and came back—not quite so deliberately, though not in the least flurried.

"They have chosen a time," he said, "when our people are all in the field; so that we are left, in a measure, defenseless. But if they are enemies we will do the best we can."

While saying this, the blood in his face began to disappear at the roots of his hair, deliberately passing down his face, and under his collar.

Notwithstanding the excitement, this deliberate disappearance of Dobson's blood struck me, and I exclaimed:

"It 's in the blood!"

"What 's in the blood?" he asked.

"If you could have seen the pallor coming over your face, you would understand—that your deliberate ways are

natural, and that it is in your blood never to be in a hurry."

We both laughed as heartily over this as we could be expected to do under the circumstances of our danger.

While the General's face was pallid, it showed no signs of fear. His Henry rifle stood in the corner of the room in its cover, and while taking out a pair of pistols from his trunk, he coolly said:

"George, take the cover off that gun."

Sixteen loads in the Henry rifle, two sixshooters, two derringers, and a double-barreled shot-gun, comprised our arms.

I brought in from the store-room a bag of buck-shot, a canister of powder, and a supply of caps. Dobson took from his trunk a quantity of cartridges. We then barred all the doors, but one, and all the windows. The latter had tight board shutters, on hinges, fastening inside with a hook.

Scarcely were our arrangements completed before we could hear the clatter of the horses' hoofs in the road. Then a sudden bringing-up at the gate followed.

Yes, it was a call on us,—whether for good or evil, we should shortly see. Only a few steps intervened between the gate and cabin. We could distinctly hear the clanking of horses' bits, and the creaking of the saddle-leathers. The blacksmith's hammer had ceased its blows.

Except the visit of a friendly overseer from a neighboring plantation, the recent call at the gin-house, and occasional calls from new-comers, this was the first we had been honored with. My having failed to satisfy the gin-house visitor might be the cause of the present visit. I could not imagine to what else it should be attributed. There was certainly a revolution in the country if it was friendly. I looked at Dobson, inquiringly, and he said:

"Mischief."

A knock at the door of our store-room followed.

George was stationed to answer it.

We heard him open it and ask: "What is it, sah?"

We could not make out the answer, but directly he came into our room to say it was a party of men after a runaway negro, who wanted to know if there was any such on Hebron.

I went to the door at once, invited them into the store, and so great was my relief that I wasted a quart of whisky on the party, and ere long they started off in search of their negro with a whoop and a yell. As they rode off George said: "Dat 's jes de way dey used to hunt niggas in reb times, 'cept dey did n't hab dogs wid 'em."

This was our first alarm, and, although a false one, served to show the nervous condition we were in. A month later we had the second, which, although not presenting as serious an aspect, at the beginning, as the first, made up for this lack at the close. It was when the news came of the overthrow of a constitutional convention in New Orleans, accompanied by several murders of members. Under orders from the President, the troops did not interfere to arrest bloodshed. This led the Southern people to believe that they could do as they pleased.

A party of the "mischievous boys" gained possession of copies of New Orleans papers, with glowing accounts of the bloody affair. Weighed down with pistols, and more or less filled with rum, they came to Hebron whooping and yelling like so many demons. They came into our store screaming, "Victory! victory! we 're going to git back all we lost by the war. Here it is, read it!" And then they rudely shoved the New Orleans papers at us for perusal.

"Oh! Andy is our friend, he is. He sustains our courts in New Orleans. We 've been reinforcing hell with radicals down thar, and the troops are pertecting us."

"We 've got every thing our own way now," said an-

other of the party, "and we 're goin' to make it hot for the radical party."

"It certainly looks that way," I said, after glancing over the head-lines. "I see the President stands by the courts in New Orleans."

Dobson added: "It is all so mixed, I can't get the straight of it."

"Not at all, General; not in the least, sa'—it 's our own people ag'inst the radicals; so long 's the radicals had the Pres*ident*, there was no show for us; but he is with us now —so good-by, radicals."

"You 'd better believe there 's hell in a hand-basket for the d—d cowardly radical party."

"Yes, and every man 's got to take sides," said the principal spokesman.

"That 's so, that 's so," they all responded.

"No toting water on both shoulders," cried the ringleader. "Not a bit of it." "Every body 's got to speak out in meetin'," was the general response.

Evidently there was an attempt to force us to commit ourselves. The men were armed, excited by liquor, and frenzied by what they regarded their great victory. They showed their revolvers freely, and strutted around the store as if they had taken possession. The outlook was ugly.

To quiet them Dobson said: "You know, gentlemen, we are comparative strangers here—not acquainted with the affairs of the South. We have never been politicians, and have no intention of becoming so now."

"That 's just what we brought up these papers for," answered the leader—"so 's to post you. As for bein' politicians, this 's the South's fight, and every body in the South 's got to take an interest, or git out." There was the expression of the hyena in our visitors' faces at this threat. "I showed the news to Col. Tupper, and he said; 'Damn 'em; it 's good enough for 'em—they 'd no use bein' radi-

cals.' Do you know Tupper, General? He 's a splendid fellow."

"Yes, he is," they all shouted.

Tupper was a new-comer, from somewhere in the North, and, doubtless, had adopted the principles of the neighborhood he chanced to be in; or, it may be, in this case, the party had over-persuaded him.

The General said he had heard of him, but had never met him. By dint of diplomacy and whisky, we were finally rid of our unwelcome visitors, without putting ourselves on the record as in sympathy with them—but we made several close shaves! There was a constant display of teeth and claws, and coarse language on their part—enough to last us for the rest of our lives. It is more than likely that the extra half-gallon of whisky we got into them saved us.

CHAPTER LIX.

WE CELEBRATE THE FOURTH OF JULY.

Between the levee and the river on the lower end of Hebron was a piece of wood-land, well set in Bermuda grass, with little undergrowth, and, although untouched by the hand of man, having a park-like appearance. It was on the very edge of the Mississippi, which, at the season of highest flood, lacked a few inches of covering it, thus annually constituting it a little island, upon which steamboats landed, depositing plantation freight, which would then be taken in skiffs, or flatboats, and carried across the slough to the levee beyond, and there loaded into wagons.

The Mississippi being on a ridge, the bank is always the highest land, but this spot was particularly elevated. Our

mules were turned out, Saturday afternoons and Sundays, to graze on the levee, and they used to delight in this grove, where they fed off the luxurious growth of the Bermuda grass, and, when filled, stood in the shade where, swept as it always was by the breezes from off the river, they found the coolest spot on the place. There was no need to mow it, because the mules always kept it cropt short, thus making a very presentable lawn. The trees were festooned with the wonderful vine-growth peculiar to this region; mocking-birds flew in and out, filling the ear with their music, while red-birds, and an endless variety of the feathery tribe captivated the eye with beauty. Once I saw a deer standing in this natural park, dripping with water, having swam across the Mississippi, to elude some hunter and his hounds. His broad antlers, erect head, and distended nostrils were only visible for a moment, and then he shot out through the trees, over the levee, across the plantation, and so into the woods again.

In this park we decided to hold our Fourth of July celebration. Accordingly, the day before that date, we detailed a couple of men to build tables, and arrange for the feast. Dobson thought there was no need of erecting a platform for the orator, saying:

"I will stand in the lumber wagon, which we can have hauled down and properly placed for the occasion."

Nature had been so lavish toward the spot selected, that there was little to be done, beyond the placing of the tables. The green-sward for seats, and an abundance of shade, were already at hand. As may be supposed, we had no solicitude regarding the place of our festival. It was the feast itself that worried us—and not the drink, for we had the barrel of beer—but the necessary victuals. Flour, brown sugar, and molasses we had in the store-room. We had, also, some shoulder-bacon, which was considered nicer than salt pork.

Faithful Aunt Clara and the beautiful Mary were de-

tailed as cooks. They baked up two-thirds of a barrel of flour, fifty pounds of sugar, five gallons of molasses, into sweet-cake, and a third of a barrel of flour into short-cake, which, with a dozen shoulders of meat, boiled and cut up, constituted the principal part of the bill-of-fare. When we came to review our scanty feast, however, we sent to the village and bought half a box of lemons, to make lemonade for the women, thinking they might not all enjoy the beer. We also emptied the shelves of our store of sardines and cove oysters, thus adding to the variety and attractiveness of the proposed feast. With these final additions, our resources for the occasion were exhausted.

A certain feeling of sadness crept over me the evening preceding the Fourth, as Dobson and myself went over the slender bill-of-fare, which was all that was possible for us to offer our people—not so much that we had not the money to pay for a more attractive one, as because it was not to be had for the money. What a dinner to be considered a feast:—Ginger-cake, short-cake, shoulder-meat, lemonade, beer, a few sardines, and cove oysters!

Of course this was the material view—from the sentimental point of view it was all different. Here were the late slaves about to celebrate a national holiday. Their joy should be not in food, but in freedom. Hitherto, under the law, they had had no more interest in the Fourth of July than the mules on the plantations. Now they were, in the eyes of the law, human beings, their freedom secured. As slaves the feast had been everything; as freedmen the privilege to celebrate the day should be every thing. Whether the negroes could appreciate the difference, however, was questionable—though, doubtless, more for the stomach and less for the privilege, would have best suited most of them.

That they all enjoyed it, in anticipation, though not understanding its meaning, was unquestionable. The cooks worked with a will, and the estimation in which they

seemed to hold the food they were preparing, was the only thing that really kept us at all in heart.

"What 's dis day you all wants de darkies to celebrate?" Aunt Clara asked me, as we passed by the cabin, where she and Mary were baking.

"It 's Independence Day, Aunt Clara."

"Well, honey, de darkies ou't to 'commodate you, caze dey had to place 'pendence in de white folks ob de Norf, who done sot 'em free."

Aunt Clara thought she understood it, and she used to explain to the inquiring ones that it was "'pendence day, and we darkies hab to celebrate it, caze ob de 'pendence we put in de white folks up Norf who freed us."

Jimmy Watson came nearer the mark—he said, "It was de day as made us all free."

"Sho, nigger," replied a bullet-headed fellow, "I do n't know much, but I know better 'en dat; de Fo'th of July neber sot dis darky free, caze I was free de berry day I j'ined de Yankee sojers, an' dat was de sebenth of March. De Fo'th of July my freedom day!" he continued, as if in disgust. "Dat 's all you know, nigger. De Fo'th of July is somethin', but it aint dat; better read your catechism, Jim, 'fore you tries to show what de Fo'th of July is. Aunt Clara got de straight of it; she done got it from Mr. Harding hisself."

"Dat 's so, sho'," said another.

"Jim 's projecking wid us; he knows better," said still another. "Nigger! you better quit you projecking."

"Well, I may be wrong, but, howsomever, de Gin'al's gwine to 'splain it to us, an' den we 'll know wedder Jim 's wrong," was his generous reply, given with one of his hearty laughs.

"Unk Wash, what does de Fo'th of July mean any how? I hears so many stories 'bout it dat I dunno what

to belieb. Ellis says it was de day Linkum was bo'n, and de ca'penter, it 's Washin'ton buth-day."

"'T aint nuffen ob de kind—it means time to hab de crap clean," said Wash, with a snarl, an' ef you darkies had on'y half worked, de crap 'd been clean by dat time. Ob co'se dat 's what it means. Did n't de Gin'al foch down a bar'l a beer to be drunk on de Fo'th, when de crap 'd be clean? You niggahs 'd better stir lively, and git it clean, too, caze ef you do n't de Gin'al's gwine to pos'pone de Fo'th till ye does."

"Go 'long dah, Unk Wash, do n' you know de Gin'al can 't pos'pone the Fo'th of July?"

"He 'll do it sho', ef de crap aint out o' grass. I heard him tell Mr. Harding so. You niggahs bettah stir up, ef you wants de Fo'th to come de reg'lar time."

Dobson's sinister theory as to the beer was correct. Though it did not accomplish a complete rescue of our crop from the grass, it went a long way towards it. I will here make record that the purchase of that barrel of beer was the best investment of the season.

For a week before the Fourth, when out of the field, the women were washing and starching their finery. The men and women were more particular than ever to have the hair on their woolly heads tied up in little rolls. This is the usual custom, and is done for the purpose of taking "the kinks out." Tied up all the week, Sunday morning the strings are taken off, and the hair combed out, making a huge wavy shock for a head-covering. The Fourth being a grand occasion, their hair was kept tied up uninterruptedly for several weeks, during which time, as is their wont when their hair is not dressed, they appeared with their heads wrapped in bandanna handkerchiefs. The store was cleared of its stock of ribbons, as well as every thing else that was capable of being tortured into an adornment of the human person. We had a quantity of gay belts, collars, cuffs, and fancy neckties for the women, white shirts

and vests for the men, all of which we sold. Hats and shoes were especially in demand, and on the strength of the approaching celebration, we sold several of Dobson's cheapest fancy pipes. Thus, in a very small way, it was a speculation.

The quarters were really a beautiful sight on the morning of the Fourth. Every-body appeared in their best. Heads were combed to a nicety, producing shocks of wool so large as only to allow the hat to perch on the top of them. There were very black women in white dresses; there were all shades of dress and face, from the Mary, as black as night, and with classical features, to that other Mary, with the pink in her cheek, gown of the same shade, wavy tresses, and her redolence of tropical growth. The first Mary, in her white turban, with her Grecian cast of face, her cat-like tread, her musical voice, and singularly enough with scarcely a trace of the negro dialect in her speech, had all the graceful ways of a well-bred woman. She made a fine picture, as she sat there on her gallery, alongside of her light mulatto carpenter-husband, her small foot peeping out from under her clothes, in harmony with her small hand. Her "man's" name was Jimmy also, and he was not less devoted to his Mary than the other Jimmy was to his. As a lady's maid she would have been in her sphere; on the plantation she was simply ornamental.

"How 's all?" she asked as I passed her cabin.

"Thank you, Mary, all well."

"When did you hear from Mrs. Harding, and the children?"

"Yesterday."

"Was they well?"

"Oh, yes."

"'Member me to them, when you writes."

"Certainly, Mary."

Further along, sitting on her gallery, was Milly Carter, in her best. She was of another type. Though with as

pure negro blood as Mary, her skin was brown. She had an almond-shaped eye, straight nose, small lips; her face was long, classical, and full of character; she carried her head in a lofty manner. A working-woman, her feet and hands were large. There was a charm about Milly that always attracted me. She was never boisterous or unladylike, and as she sat there in her black alpaca, her hands folded over her lap, the picture of neatness, she would have attracted even a stranger.

There were three sisters, with a brother, of this family, in the neighborhood, and they all had the same peculiar cast of features, and were alike noted for industry and honesty, as well as the utter absence of what, for a better name, may be described as negro ways.

Milly had lived with a "took-up man" when a slave woman, but at the close of the war she was married, in due form, to another man, her first one having enlisted as a soldier and left the country.

Milly's husband was a pure negro, homely and smart. His face was pitted by small-pox, and, at first acquaintance, there was nothing attractive about him. But to hear him talk, see him work, and to know him—these were the charms. He spoke fair English, and while hearing him, if your face were turned away, you would hardly take him for a negro, there being scarcely a vestige of lingo in his utterances. He was one of the very few grown-up negroes ambitious for an education, and was practicing almost constantly with his pen and reader when not in the field. He was sitting alongside of Milly on the gallery, studying his lesson. As I came up and stopped at the steps, both rose and offered to shake hands, Aunt Milly doing so with a graceful curtsey.

"How are you both?"

Aunt Milly replied, "Poo'ly."

Charlie said, "Well, I give you thanks."

"What is the matter with you, Aunt Milly?"

"De weeds and grass hab worked us mightily."

"You are glad to get a rest, then."

"Yes, sah; indeed we is."

"Well, I hope you both will enjoy yourselves to-day."

"We expects to," they both replied.

Aunt Fannie, sitting on her gallery, was the pure African negro all over. She was the best woman fighter on the plantation, which was saying a good deal. She could drink more whisky, and kick higher than—hoe as much cotton, and plow as good a furrow as—the next one. She had already been the "took-up woman" of three different men, since she had been working for us. There was no concealment about it either. She would say: "I would n't marry de best man that eber libed; I gits tired ob 'em too soon; an' when dat time comes, I do n't make any bones ob tellin' 'em so, and if dey aint ready to quit, it 's a fa'r fight, fists and skulls, and de best one wins."

"Good morning, Fannie," I said, "you are going to have a good time of it to-day, ar' n't you?"

"Good morning, sah; O yes, sah, I'se gwine it to-day, sho'. How 's de missus and de chil'en?"

"They were well when I heard from them, thank you, Fannie."

"Dat's good; I reckon you's pow'ful lonesome widout you' lady. Is you gwine to hab dancin' to'day?"

"Certainly; you can dance all day and all night, if you like."

"To be sho' dat's good."

"You must not get into any fight to-day, Fannie."

"What does you mean, now? You knows mighty well I nebber pesters any one les'n day pesters me, or give me some cuss wo'd; den, ob co'se, I's bound to fight. Dat nigger nebber libed dat can pester or cuss me, an' me not fight."

"Well, I hope no one will 'pester' or 'cuss' you."

"I hopes not, too."

"Is dey gwine to be any 'ligious exercises to-day, Mr. Harding?" Aunt Clara asked.

"We ought to open with prayer, I think, do n't you?"

"Ob co'se I does; ef you wants to be bressed, de Bible says you must pray."

At ten in the morning we were all assembled in the grove; that is, all save Dobson—he, as usual, was a little late. We had no copy of the Declaration of Independence in our outfit, and it was impossible to find one in the neighborhood, so I was relieved of my duty.

"Brother 'Nias" opened with prayer as follows:

"Bressed Jesus, we 's all 'sembled here to-day to lis'en to some 'marks from de Gin'al, and to eat de grub, dat 's been 'pared for us by de white folks. Make us willin' to hear de truf as de Gin'al 'spounsed it, and to eat de grub wid willin' hearts, for de kingdom come's sake. Amen."

Then followed Gen. Dobson's speech, a plain, practical affair, instructing the negroes as to the meaning of the Fourth, and offering many good lessons, which, if they would profit by them, would improve their condition, he told them, and to which there was a general response:

"We 'll do it, sho'."

There was a good deal of a disposition to turn the celebration into a religious meeting, in the way of responses. Dobson was frequently interrupted by: "Dat 's so;" "Yes, bress God;" "You heah me," and so on.

The man whom we had detailed to arrange the table and supplies, in tapping the barrel of beer had evidently sampled it too freely. He was one of our up-country batch, and had, doubtless, witnessed celebrations before, so he insisted on cheering, and, during the first part of Dobson's speech, at nearly every sentence he would break out: "Hurrah for de Gin'al." This he kept up until finally, sprawling on the grass as he was, he dropped off to sleep, but even then, until he got soundly asleep, he would cry out, drowsily: "Hurrah for de Gin'al," "for de Gin'al,"

"Gin'al," until at the last he went off for good, snoring lustily in response to the rest of the speech.

So enraged were some of our people, that when Dobson finished, they caught up the drunken fellow, carried him down to the bank of the river and threw him in. Of course the water woke him up very shortly. They had a plow-line tied round his waist, so that they could pull him to shore when they thought he was sufficiently punished.

His wife undertook to rush down after him, but was stopped on the bank and held. She screamed, "You 're murdering Boone, you 're murdering Boone! Oh, my poor husband; let me drown wid him!"

"Luff her go," Aunt Fannie cried, "Ef she 's fool enough to drown for dat niggah, she ought to be 'lowed to do it."

On all sides the exclamation was, "It done sarved him right for interruptin' de Gin'al." Finally, after ducking him well, pushing him away from the bank several times, Boone was hauled in, and he came crawling up the bank. Every-body, by this time, was screaming with laughter at the spectacle. His wife, released, threw herself on his breast, crying, "Thank God, you 're saved!"

But Boone pushed her off, saying, "Go 'way, gal; it sa'ved me right fo' gettin' drunk."

Our master of ceremonies, notwithstanding his acknowledgment of the justice of his punishment, was very much crest-fallen. He soon slunk away, and laid himself down in the sun, where he could at once reflect over his folly and dry out his clothes. His wife carried dinner to him, and they took it together. But the day was spoiled for Boone, though the episode served to enliven the rest of our people, and furnished them a topic to talk and laugh over for the remainder of the day.

The feast was a success, and the beer and lemonade flowed freely. Although there was enough of every thing, such as it was, and the negroes seemed to consider it very nice, there was no surplus. Quite a number of negroes

from adjoining plantations were drawn to the spot by curiosity. They were invited to join in the ceremonies and did so willingly.

Our celebration was noised about, in the neighborhood, and there was much sharp criticism, among the whites, over the alleged fact that we had placed ourselves on an equality with the negroes! The loudest to make this charge were those who were reputed to be constantly associating with a portion of the negro race, in a much closer intimacy than that for which they were blaming us.

The New Orleans papers reported that the Fourth was celebrated, in that city, by the firemen at the Fair Grounds, where there was a charge for admission: "Proceeds to go to the patriotic purpose of assisting to pay for a monument to the Confederate Dead."

CHAPTER LX.

THE ARMY-WORM.

As early as July 19th, the first alarm of the dreaded army-worm was sounded in Texas. It did not follow as a certainty, however, that its visitation was to be general in the South. In fact, there was no serious apprehension of this.

The appearance in Texas was declared to be only a sporadic case. Other similar cases would be reported from time to time in different localities, but beyond this the destroyer would not go. The Southern people had made up their minds that there was to be no worm, and they would not listen to any contrary belief. Get your crop clean of grass and weeds, was the word, and with late frost there is a good show for a fair middle and top crop yet.

Encouraged, therefore, by the general belief and voice, we continued to push ahead.

Already had Dobson's worst fears been realized with regard to my sickness. Frequently I would come in from my exposure in the field with a chill on me, but as soon as the fever passed off, in the evening, I would begin taking quinine, in eight-grain doses, until I had taken thirty grains, and the next day I would be in my saddle again. I also swallowed frequent huge pills of blue-mass, followed, the next morning, by castor-oil for physic.

But neither my dosing nor sickness kept me out of the field more than a few hours at a time. The umbrella, which I had recently scoffed at, was now my faithful companion, and under its shade I rode about from squad to squad, encouraging a little, scolding a good deal, and pushing everywhere.

To get our crop out of the grass and weeds, so that with no worm, and a late frost, it would reward our efforts, was my great desire. I did not expect health now. My chills were chronic. Frost and time were the only effective remedies. Frost was in the future, and meanwhile if I could save my life so as still to superintend our work, I would be satisfied.

"Mr. Harding, what is the matter with your voice? You do n't seem to be able to control it at all," said Dobson one day. "It is as fine as a woman's. Where is your will theory?"

Such was the fact. I talked with a squeak, and could no more control my voice than can the boy who is just merging into manhood. It was not in the least painful, but it was very annoying. When undertaking to give a command in the field, there would issue but the faintest sound of a voice, and I would sometimes hear, in an undertone, from one negro to another, the remark:

"De boss speaks like a 'oman."

Dobson never ceased jesting at me, because I did not bring into requisition my "will," and restore my voice to its normal condition. Not that he was at all heartless. No, indeed; generous, noble man, every thing that his great medical skill could do for me was done, and in my frequent paroxysms, he nursed me, most tenderly, but he said, "There must be something to laugh at to keep our spirits up."

Just to the extent that each successive chill served to weaken me, was my voice weakened. But while my "will theory" was exploded, my energy to have our crop clean was unabated, and therefore pushing ahead was the order of the day.

By sunrise our people were all out in the field, and the plantation quarters had all the appearance of a deserted village. I offered rations of whisky for extra work. This I soon found to be the magic power that compelled into service all the work there was in the negro of either sex.

"Hoe and plow out this field by sundown, and there is a ration of whisky, all around, for you when you come into the quarters to-night," was sure to accomplish the task. When the hands reached the quarters, to see them run for their cups, to hold their ration of whisky, and then rush to the store to get it, was sufficient to convince one of their fondness for it.

Finally, in the midst of our struggle, on the morning of the 18th of August, a messenger from a planter living a few miles from us—a native Southerner, and reputed to be the best planter in the country—brought us word to the effect that he had the day before found a few army-worms on his cotton, and he thought that if we should look into our largest, and healthiest patches, we might find them, too.

Though this intelligence was very unwelcome, its communication was the first act which bore any resemblence to kindness we had yet experienced. The planter's name

was Sinton, and he had a partner from Boston. They had really a splendid prospect for a crop, if the worm and frost kept away, having several hundred acres as fine as our best patches. Mr. Sinton sent us word they were going to try to kill off the worms, and if we found them on our cotton and would call, he would gladly show us the process.

Accordingly Dobson and myself called, when we found his entire force organized as an executioner's squad. Each one had two paddles, and there were two laborers to each cotton-row. Walking along, each one on his side kept a sharp lookout, and whenever they espied an army-worm lying on top of a cotton-leaf, they crushed him with their paddles.

Mr. Sinton explained that this was the first crop of the army-worm, and that there were but a few of them in each field; that this crop did not undertake to eat off the cotton-leaf to any considerable extent, or, if they did, being so few, their effort did not amount to any thing. He told us they always lay on the upper side of the leaf, and, being a black-striped worm, were, although small, easily distinguishable on the green cotton-leaf. "If left alone," he said, "this worm lies around on top of the cotton-leaf until it gets its growth, which takes two or three days; then he crawls on the underside of the leaf, folding it around him, and goes into a chrysalis state; at the end of seven days, from this chrysalis is hatched a miller. This miller lives about a week, during which he deposits, on the under side of the cotton-leaf, innumerable eggs. These eggs hatch out the second crop of worms. In the same way the third crop is hatched. Each egg hatching a worm, each worm producing a miller, and each miller depositing myriads of eggs, by the time the third crop of worms appear, they are in sufficient numbers to eat off the leaves of the cotton, and thus kill the stalk."

"You have certainly given us a very clear description of

the miller, and the worm. You must have made them a close study," Dobson said.

"Yes, sir; I know the army-worm as well as I know the mule."

"Let me see—what time do you give between the different generations?" I asked.

"During the ten days after the first appearance of the worm, he goes into the chrysalis, and comes out the miller, commencing immediately to lay his crop of eggs. In ten days more these eggs hatch out the second crop of worms."

"Which makes twenty days between each generation."

"Precisely."

"So that forty days from now, unless they are arrested, that portion of your crop not already made will be destroyed."

"That 's just the situation."

"Your crop would be eaten up about the 28th of September?"

"Unless they are arrested, it won 't vary two days from that date."

"Such being the fact, what is your programme in full?" Dobson asked. "Though I see," he added, looking at the men at work, "you are aiming to destroy the worm."

"Yes, sir; that is our purpose."

"Do you think it can be done effectually?"

"If the effort is thorough, and general, yes. If we kill all the worms on this place, and our neighbors above and below us should do nothing, you can imagine what would follow. Their first crop of worms would all hatch, and their millers would come into our fields and lay their eggs. They would certainly do it, because we have the finest crop, which the miller always hunts, so we would have the second crop of worms all the same. And, even if we could destroy the second crop, our neighbors still doing nothing, when the third crop, hatched in their fields, has eaten them up, it has only to cross into ours and destroy us."

"Have you notified your immediate neighbors?"

"Oh, yes; they have all promised to go at the work of destruction."

"You may rely upon us being thorough," Dobson said.

"We did not doubt that," Mr. Sinton replied. "We may not be able to destroy the worm altogether," he added, "even with the best efforts; but it is our only hope, and, considering the stake, it is worth a trial. Even if we should not destroy him altogether, we may reduce him, so that it will take the fourth generation of the worm to eat us up. This would give our crop twenty more days to make, which, on a thousand acres of healthy cotton, would make a difference of two hundred bales, or twenty-five thousand dollars in value."

Mr. Sinton's plantation was a beautiful sight. There were great fields of luxuriantly growing cotton. There was good corn in abundance. No grass or weeds were to be seen any where; no, not even in the ditches, or on the ditch-banks. All the ditches were newly-bridged with heavy two-inch cypress plank. The whole place was surrounded by a brand-new plank fence.

And such a garden! There, growing in the greatest abundance, was every thing in the shape of vegetables. Poultry were cackling in the yard, and a herd of at least a hundred cattle were grazing on the levee-front, among which were milch cows. In a pen, at the right of the house, were some twelve or fifteen calves, whisking off the flies under the shade of the locust and china trees. A pair of lordly peafowls moved about through the yard. Then, there were guineas, turkeys, old and young chickens—in all stages of growth, from the diminutive ones, newly from the shell, to their fellows, just the size for frying. A flock of sheep, in which we noticed a number of lambs, and some goats, with their kids, lying in the shade at the front gate —and which we had to scare away in order to gain entrance —also spoke of thrift and plenty.

The cabins and fences around the house were newly white-washed, and the house itself had a fresh coat of white paint, with green for the shutters and lattice. The doors were off their hinges, and the windows were up, and in their stead were frames covered with mosquito netting and hung with springs.

As we sat in Mr. Sinton's office, the breeze came sweeping in through the netting, and there was scarcely a fly or insect to be seen, and not a single striped-legged mosquito to annoy us.

"What a splendid arrangement this is for letting the air in and keeping the insects out," Dobson said.

"Yes," Mr. Sinton replied, "this is a contrivance of my partner, Mr. Lothard. He brought it out with him from Boston."

Just then a mulatto girl came in with a plateful of luscious ripe figs, followed by another with plates, spoons, and a pitcher of what turned out to be pure cream. What a treat it was! It made us forget, for the moment, our prospective struggle with the army-worm, our discomforts at home, and every thing else. How much more acceptable it was than that everlasting whisky, which was generally set out for the visitor here! Notwithstanding it was my first dish of figs and cream, there was no annoyance about it, such as I had encountered at General Hampson's, over my first whisky toddy.

"Do figs grow readily here?" I asked.

"Oh, yes; as readily as the weeds. I reckon you have already found out there is but little trouble in getting *them* to grow," Mr. Sinton said, laughingly.

"No, sir; the trouble is just the reverse."

"It's that fact that has put the squeak in my partner's voice, which you have probably discovered," Dobson said, between spoonfuls of figs, and with a mischievous twinkle of the eye. And then he had to tell Mr. Sinton about my

will theory, and the result, over which there was a good laugh.

"I go out at all times," Mr. Sinton said, "but in the heat of the day always under the umbrella."

"Oh, Mr. Harding is a convert, now," General Dobson explained.

"Yes, I observe you both came up under umbrellas. But have you no figs on Hebron?"

"If there is one there, we have never discovered it," Dobson answered.

"The fact is," I put in, with a bitter feeling at heart, at the contrast, "we have nothing on Hebron but weeds, grass, and discomforts generally, and you seem to have nothing here but comforts. This is a paradise; our place is a hell, if you will pardon so strong an expression—but no other word describes it."

"I suppose Hebron is bare of every thing. It was never a home for anybody before the surrender. General Hampson intended it as a marriage portion for one of his daughters. He would have fixed it up when that event took place. But you were speaking about figs. There are two crops each year—the first coming on in June, the second later, and, like cotton and oranges, there are figs in all stages of growth on the same bush, at the same time. The first crop hardly amounts to any thing, but the second crop runs from the middle of July to the middle of September. The fig-bushes on this place cover the sixteenth of an acre, and it would be easy to gather half a barrel of ripe figs a day, during the season. What we don't consume and preserve, fall upon the ground, when they get overripe, and the poultry eat them. They are said to be very fattening, and give poultry a most delicious flavor."

"Is it much trouble to plant the bushes?"

"None at all; all you have to do is to break off a limb and stick it in the ground, and it will grow. In this rich soil and warm climate almost every thing grows from slips.

"Coffee ready, sah."

"All right, Dinah.—Gentlemen, will you join me in a cup of coffee? It is a beverage I take as often as I come in from the field. I drink it instead of whisky, and consider it the finest possible tonic. I don't know how I should get along without coffee. In fact, I don't believe I could do without it."

Dobson said: "We are drinking it the first thing in the morning, and it has a delightful effect." And so we joined Mr. Sinton in a cup of black coffee.

It is hardly necessary to say that we were delighted with this gentleman, and every thing we saw during this visit, our only regret being that we could not meet Mr. Lothard, who was absent in Vicksburg. We saw none of the ladies of the household, though the tidy arrangement as well as general neatness of every thing, bore witness to their presence in the house, and probably it was their thoughtfulness which had inspired our generous refreshment of figs and cream.

Here, then, was a complete verification of the fact that it was possible to live comfortably in this country. So far as creature comforts went, Mr. Sinton's household lacked nothing. If this was a sample of the plantations of the South, as they were before the war, then there was much for the Southern people to be proud of. That Mr. Sinton could in so short a time put his plantation in the shape it was, and surround himself with every thing in the line of farm comforts, stamped him as a remarkable man. Aside from his achievements, we were charmed with Mr. Sinton. His Boston partner was an evidence, we thought, of the absence of sectional bitterness. And there had not been a symptom of this in his reception and treatment of us. His every utterance was stamped with good common sense, and that he was a good farmer his magnificent crop testified.

Mr. Lothard returned our call a few days later, and we found him to be a wide-awake Boston man, just as thorough

and competent in the line of accounts, as Mr. Sinton was in that of agriculture.

He was loud in his praise of the latter, saying: "It would be impossible for half a dozen spadefuls of dirt to be thrown upon any spot of our plantation, and Mr. Sinton not find it out within twelve hours. He sees every blow struck, every furrow turned, and almost knows each cotton-stalk by sight." This on twelve hundred acres! Mr. Sinton had sprung from the rank of overseer, and was in every sense a practical and self-made man.

Immediately on our return from calling upon Mr. Sinton, we inspected some of our largest cotton, as he had suggested, and there was the army-worm! Only here and there one, it is true, but enough to say that they were in our field. As a result of this examination, we called in all the plows and hoes, put the mules on the levee, in charge of our stock-yard man, where they could easily get their living, feeding on the Bermuda grass, and placed our entire force in the field with paddles to slay the worms.

Each day fresh worms were hatched, so we went over and over again, killing them off. Wherever a leaf was turned, was a sign that some worm had escaped our vigilence and gone into the chrysalis state. Each laborer was supplied with a bag, with orders to pull these off, and at evening they were brought into the quarters, heaped in a pile, and burned.

We worked our force zealously, but were surrounded by skeptics. Our neighbors, above and below, notwithstanding Mr. Sinton seconded our efforts to persuade them to do so, refused to lift a hand toward the destruction of the worm.

There were always a few in their fields, they said, and that was all it amounted to; or, this was a grass-worm, and not the army-worm at all. There was no danger, they held; so when the ten days came around, there was a second crop of millers. Some of these came into our cabin

suddenly one evening. We suspected them to be the anticipated army-worm millers, because we had not seen any thing like them before. They had snuff-colored wings, with a little brown spot on each, and they had pink eyes. They were beautiful. We caught one, and took it up to Mr. Sinton's in the morning for verification of our surmise.

"Yes, that is unmistakably the army-worm miller," Mr. Sinton said. "They came beating against Mr. Lothard's netting last night. We have resolved to station lights for them. You know how an ordinary miller flies into the light and gets his wings scorched. These do the same. During the day, they hide themselves in the shade, remaining perfectly inactive, coming out at dusk to lay their eggs, which they do very rapidly, flitting from stalk to stalk. Their eggs are never deposited on any thing besides the cotton leaf. Nor does the army-worm ever eat any thing else.

"Our plan is to build platforms, a few inches higher than the cotton, at stated distances throughout our fields; fill the largest plates we can find with oil, put a wick in the oil, place them on the platform, and then at the dusk of evening light them. The millers will fly into the lights, singe themselves, and then fall into the oil, where they will stick fast. Every miller, so destroyed, involves the destruction of myriads of eggs, which would hatch out the second crop of worms ten days hence."

I visited Mr. Sinton's fields, and found his force busily engaged in making platforms for the lights. A sharpened post was driven into the ground, and a plank, wide enough to hold a plate, was fixed on top. Plates were being filled with oil, and wicks placed therein, and then deposited, ready for lighting, on the platforms. Every thing was to be in readiness for a general lighting-up that night. I hurried off home and put our force at work in like manner.

In order to see just how destructive a single light would be on the millers, I put some oil on a plate, with a wick in it, and placed it on the end of our cabin gallery, lighting it

up at the same time with those in the field. The millers flew all around this light, but they would not fly into it. They seemed to understand that it was there for their especial destruction. Every thing else of insect life flew into it. We captured but a single cotton-worm miller in our gallery light that night.

"If this is a sample of what the rest of our lights have done," Dobson said, as he picked out the single scorched miller, "they are clearly a failure."

"They certainly seem to be as shrewd as they are beautiful," I replied.

"Yes, they are all that," Dobson answered, with a long face. "There have been plenty of them flying around all the evening, and only one has been captured. Who ever saw a miller before that would not fly into a light?"

The following morning we visited our lights in the field. It was the story of the one on the gallery repeated, only worse—because in some of them there was not a single miller.

"I fear we are in for the worm, Mr. Harding," said Dobson, gloomily.

"Oh, I don't know—we don't seem to be able to do any thing with millers, but that will only compel us to stir around livelier when their eggs hatch out. We can kill the worms, and, if everybody would turn their force out, as Mr. Sinton does, I firmly believe we could put the destruction of our crop off until the fourth generation of the worm, thus giving us twenty days' more grace."

We rode out again in the evening, and all along the ditch-banks, flying forth from the dense weed-growth fringing them, we could see the army-worm millers flitting out into the cotton, busy as bees, laying their eggs.

We tried our lights the second night, but to no better purpose, and we then abandoned them.

We called to see Mr. Sinton with reference to his success

with the lights, and were informed by him that his also were a perfect failure.

Mr. Lothard, his partner, was of the opinion that the worm could be killed by sprinkling the stalks with a solution of diluted carbolic acid, and they had sent to New Orleans by the packet for a supply of it—also, a number of sprinkling cans—to be ready for the next crop of worms, which might with certainty be looked for from seven to ten days hence.

We decided to rely upon our paddles to destroy the worm, our chemical knowledge telling us that there was little to be expected from the acid treatment.

CHAPTER LXI.

CHOLERA.

MISFORTUNES never come singly, and among other visitations to the South, during this memorable year, was that of cholera. It began its destructive campaign in New Orleans early in the season. Slowly, but surely, it had traveled up the Mississippi. Not confined to the crowded cities on its banks, it visited the towns in the interior and also the sugar-plantations. Its breath soon pervaded the atmosphere, and its fatality almost kept pace with the number of those attacked.

Baton Rouge, Natchez, Vicksburg, and all the important river landings, in turn, were smitten. So fatal and widespread was its course, that not only in several of these large places, but in various parts of the country as well, its dead were buried in trenches, as are soldiers after a battle in which there has been a terrible and general slaughter.

Never had an epidemic better material to feed upon. Here were cities which had recently been but so many grand camps for our soldiery. The change from military to civil rule was the signal for the utmost license. The new city governments were only such in name. No sanitary measures were taken. Each city had its negro quarter, in which the black race were huddled, all sexes and ages together.

The atmosphere became pregnant with the foul odors, which arose from these dens reeking with filth and corruption. Not a hand was raised to stay the cloud of noxious vapors, which hung like a pall over these Southern cities. Nor was there pure air anywhere. As we have seen, the country was weed-ridden, the ditches were choked-up and filled with stagnant pools, on which coatings of green scum had formed, from which malaria was constantly arising, to be taken into the lungs at every breath.

Then it should be remembered that this epidemic was operating upon a recently enfranchised race, who had always been cared for by their late masters, but who were now left to care for themselves. The result was,—filthy cabins, filthy persons, general and all-pervading filth. It is in just such localities as these that epidemics are generated and flourish. Among the negroes on the sugar plantations and through the settlements below, cholera raged, reaching, in its upward march, the cotton plantations, and, at last, appearing in our neighborhood.

Every thing was in its favor. Unquestionably, in very many places the negroes were very poorly fed. A large number of the planters were making their crops by borrowing money of cotton-factors in New Orleans; many of them had already exhausted the advances promised them. By this time it was evident the crop was to be short. Especially was this the case on the overflow places. The worm had made its appearance in different localities. Factors either declined to fill further orders for planters'

supplies, or filled them reluctantly, and after much delay. The result was, that there was frequently neither meat nor meal—nothing was left for the poor negro but to go out and spear the unhealthy fish in the sloughs and bayous, or to eat such other unwholesome things as he could lay his hands on. In very many cases it was either this or starvation, and in many thousand cases, during the year, it was death all the same, since there is nothing so conducive to cholera as the soft river fish.

The first outbreak in our neighborhood—on a plantation just below us—was the direct result of such fish-diet, and the victims numbered twenty-seven out of a force of seventy-five. The plantation in our rear had a force of eighty-seven, and there were thirty deaths. Finally, in order to arrest the fearful scourge, the planter had to move out of his cabins entirely, putting his decimated force under hastily-built bowers in the woods. On the plantation above us seven, out of a force of twenty, died.

Thus we were surrounded by this fatal plague. As often as a death occurred, the plantation bell would ring out its funeral note, and almost every hour during this brief, but terrible period, its mournful echo sounded in our ears. There were no long funeral ceremonies now—no praying over the dead at night; there was the death-rattle in the throat; then the blanket wrapped around the yet warm corpse, then this was placed in the cart, trundled off, and deposited in the wide, gaping mouth of the daily extended trench.

Day after day we waited in dread expectation that Hebron would also be smitten with the plague. It could hardly be otherwise. The cholera was in the air. It surrounded us. Our escape from it would be a miracle. In the meantime, however, we resorted to extreme measures to ward it off, not expecting to do this, but hoping at least to mitigate the force of its attack. We purified every part of our quarters, by the free use of lime, white-wash-

ing our cabins inside; prohibited all but river water for drinking purposes; compelled the negroes to wash their bodies; watched to see that no speared fish or unwholesome meats were eaten—and so, day after day passed without a case on our plantation, until the epidemic finally ran its course in the neighborhood, and left us untouched.

We were profoundly thankful at our escape. It now seemed, for the first time, that a kind Providence was smiling upon our undertaking. Here was a distinct reward for the honest and earnest effort we had put forth in behalf of our laborers. We had encountered many difficulties and misfortunes up to this time; but now a dreaded plague had passed over us—this was the first bow of promise in our sky.

"I feel as if I had just passed through a fearful battle, where my comrades had all fallen," said Dobson, with emotion; "only consider the mortality of this neighborhood, and then think of our escape."

A singular feature of this epidemic was its reception by the negroes. Why did they not seek to escape it by flight? It mowed them down, as I have related, and yet not one ever attempted to run away from it—this, too, while it is said that they take great fright at the approach of yellow fever, to which they are not at all susceptible.

CHAPTER LXII.

NEGRO DISTRUST.

Our lights for the destruction of the army-worm miller having proved a failure, and therefore been abandoned, and the further cultivation of our crop being at an end, our laborers in the field would now be without employment un-

til the second crop of the worms appeared, when they would resume their paddles and renew the war of extermination.

The cultivation of the crop ceases generally about the middle of July. The picking season opens about the 1st of September. Thus there are six weeks of comparative rest, when Northern farmers are at their harvest. Our busiest season is during the picking of the crop, and it is at its height from October to February. Scarcely is the old crop off, before plowing for the new commences. Frequently picking of the old and plowing for the new crop are carried on in the same field. From this it will be seen that there is absolutely no period of rest in the cotton region, except this midsummer season. This is the period of inclement heat—when the dog-star rages—and wisely has Providence arranged it as a time for rest, just as midwinter is the period of comparative rest for the farmers of the North.

It is interesting to remark that the crop of cotton is plowed, planted, and in part cultivated, during a season of moderate temperature, and that the season for gathering the crop—which, as I have stated, although not hard work in itself, is much the most pressing duty of the year—occurs at a time when the thermometer does not vary much from an average of 70°. It would be difficult to imagine a more delightful temperature than this. In fact, the only discomforts during the picking season are towards its close, from cold rains and the frosts, which chill the fingers of the pickers. There are certain duties to be performed during this midsummer period. The wood for ginning the crop has to be cut and hauled to the gin-house, as well as that for the winter use of the planter and his laborers. This is a time when the swampy roads through the woods have thoroughly dried out, thus leaving them in good condition for hauling the wood, whereas, in winter, after the annual rains have set in, the roads are well-nigh

impassable. Besides, after the picking season has opened, there is no time to do any thing else. The manufacture of baskets for the picked cotton is another duty belonging to the men at this period, while the women make the picking-sacks from heavy Osnaberg. The difficulty of overseeing these employments, to secure an honest day's work, was a matter of solicitude. My policy had been to put the laborers on their honor. Having no overseer, we were entirely in their hands. To raise their standard, and make them efficient, without a watch-dog supervision, was my aim. I offered to job the work, naming seventy-five cents a cord for wood, and fifty cents apiece for baskets, but there seemed a disposition to dicker with me. The negroes evidently distrusted me. My white face was at a discount. I had not gained their confidence. Clearly this feeling of distrust was not to be rooted out in a few months of even perfectly fair treatment. Finally I said, "Name a price yourselves;" and they went to hold counsel over it. Returning, shortly, one of them said that he and his partner would cut twenty-five cords of wood for ten dollars, which was the very best they could do; that they could not begin to do it at my figure of seventy-five cents a cord—they would like to accommodate us, but could not afford it. After which he looked wise, as did his companions.

"Are you all willing to cut at that figure," I asked.

"Yes, sah!" "Yes, sah!" came from all sides.

"All right; it is a bargain."

"I know'd de boss 'd come to our price," I heard one negro say to another, with a knowing wink.

"Yes, de boss know 'd mighty well six bits aint no price for cuttin' a co'd o' wood," was the reply.

"Dat 's so, sho'," piped in another, in an undertone.

"What will you make the baskets for?" I asked.

"I 'll git y' up six for three dollars," called out an old, white-wooled bundle of rags. Several others were ready

to do the same, so that we at once had as many basket-makers as we wanted. I did not say a word to the negroes about having underbid us on the wood, resolving to keep quiet until their job was done; when they came for their pay I would read them a lesson on distrust.

Those selected for the respective tasks of wood-chopping and basket-making returned to their work, happy at having got their own bargain.

I had no trouble in fixing a price with the women for making the picking-sacks. I soon found that it was much easier to deal with them than with the men. Was this because their sex shielded them, even when slaves, and that, therefore, they had not learned the lesson of distrust, as had the men?

CHAPTER LXIII.

ANTS *vs.* CHRYSALIS.

As Mr. Sinton had predicted, in just twenty days from the appearance of the first crop of the army-worm, the second crop began to show itself.

Scarcely, therefore, were our jobs of wood-chopping, basket-making and sack-making completed before we had to resume the destruction of the worm. There was no trouble in finding it this time, and in consequence, getting over the fields was necessarily slow. The paddles kept up a constant clapping sound, as they came together, crushing this enemy of the cotton-plant, and a peculiar pungent odor prevaded the atmosphere in the immediate neighborhood, as the result of the wholesale slaughter.

This second crop of worms was as active as the first had been sluggish. It was evidently determined to make the

most of its brief span of life. One morning the new-born babe would come up from its birth-place under the leaf, and lie on top of it—a tiny thing, no larger than the half of a cambric needle—while, at the end of the third day, there would be the full-grown worm, about the size of an inch of slate pencil.

This generation did no traveling from stalk to stalk, either finding in its original plant enough to feed on, from the time of its birth, or a premature death between the paddles.

"There is certainly nothing hap-hazard in the movement of the worm," Dobson said. "I had supposed he came, suddenly and unexpectedly, in great numbers, and full-grown, moving in army-order from field to field, destroying the crop as he went. But from what we have seen, it is plain his coming is as systematic as is that of human kind, hence, I suppose, the term army—for I see nothing else in his movement which would make that name appropriate."

"I wonder if the coming of all this insect life about us here is thus regular?" I asked.

"I suppose it must be so."

"I had never thought of the thing quite in that light, but of course such is the fact. How true it is, that 'God numbers the hairs of our head, and not a sparrow falls without His notice.' This thought changes my feeling towards these horrible pests from disgust to awe. Only think of it! from this it would seem that all these innumerable, variously-shaped things, which frequently look like hap-hazard clippings from woolen cloths of different colors, that are now flying around our lamp, from the size of a pin-head to that of a beetle, have their birth, span of life, and are no more the results of accident than are we."

"You remember the buffalo-gnats," said Dobson, "that came last May—continuing some three weeks—and then

suddenly disappearing under the hot rays of the June sun, which Uncle Wash said burned them up?"

"Yes, indeed; I shall not soon forget them, and how they used to bite our hands and faces, but especially our necks behind our ears, raising great blisters—at once so lazy and so greedy that, when we felt the sting, they allowed us to put our fingers on them and pick them off, and so soft and tender were they that they went all to pieces in the operation. And I remember how Billy used to grease the mules in and around their ears, between their legs and on their breasts with a preparation of lard and coal-oil, to keep these gnats from stinging them to death, as is not unfrequently the case; and then how he anointed the exposed parts of his own body with the same, thus going about with a greased look and an odor of coal-oil. Remember the buffalo-gnats? I guess I do—though why 'buffalo' I can not see, looking, as they do, like the tiniest flies, unless it is because of the size of their bite."

"Well, these gnats are said to be unfailing in their annual visitation, coming about the same time each year, lasting about three weeks—though this depends a good deal upon the heat which is required to scald them—and then suddenly disappearing."

"There is one thing to be said in favor of both the army-worm and buffalo-gnat. They do their work and then disappear. There are the mosquito and the red-bug that hang on through the season. I wish they would crowd their stay in as short a space. I think of all the insects that prey upon us here, the red-bug is the worst. He is invisible to the naked eye, and thus small, you can not feel him crawling on your body, and so pick him off. He is courageous, traveling as he does up your sleeves, pantaloons, and down your neck, until he finds his favorite spots on your body—among others in your arm-pits—and then, after he has bored his way into your body, for the first time you feel him."

"Yes, I think you do feel him," said Dobson, scratching. "What satisfaction it can be to these atoms to sift themselves on your body from the leaves that you strike while passing a tree or bush, or the grass you walk through, and make at once shroud, coffin and grave of their burrow (for you know they never bite but once, when it is a blister to you and death to them), is beyond my comprehension. And where they keep all their bite is more than I can conceive. I sometimes think they must be made of springs, drawn into the utmost tension, and when they get into your body, somehow the spring suddenly flies out, so that what entered your skin an atom, is instantly enlarged to the size of a bumble-bee, with a combination of its sting and the bite of a flea."

"The bite of the red-bug is not so much as is the poison in its little body,—for there must be poison, else it would not swell and fester as it does. But, to get back to our subject, I wonder how the army-worm winters over. Let us ride up to Mr. Sinton's and get his views on the subject."

"Agreed," replied Dobson.

We found Mr. Sinton at home, and, like us, engaged in battling with the army-worm. In answer to our inquiry he said: "When the third, and last crop of the army-worm comes, they eat the leaves off the cotton. Of course, we hope, this year, for the sake of our crop, that the third generation will leave that task to the fourth, but usually the third generation does the work. This crop are travelers—that is, they crawl from stalk to stalk, and sometimes from field to field, not stopping until the cotton leaves are all eaten off. Thus there are no leaves left under which they can go into the chrysalis state to hatch out the fourth crop of millers. Feeding exclusively on cotton, as they do, this crop of worms is larger than the supply of feed, so that many of the later comers are starved to death. A few crawl off into the woods, ditches and under-growth, and

hide themselves in rotten logs and various other places, where they go into the chrysalis state, in which condition they remain, subject to destruction by storms or the severity of the winter, until the warm weather of the following season, when those left alive hatch out as millers, and thus is started another year's crop. If the winter is severe but few survive, in which case it takes more generations to bring them up to destructive numbers, by which time the crop is made, and so the worm infliction is escaped for that season. It is because of this that the ditches should all be thoroughly cleaned, the undergrowth cut away, and every thing burned up early in the spring, thus destroying the chrysalis, which otherwise would hatch out millers. When the country is cleared up, there will no longer be sufficient hiding-places for the chrysalis to winter over, and so there will be no more destruction of cotton by the army-worm. Until then he is likely to visit us annually, either to a greater or less extent, depending upon the severity of the winter. Before the war we kept things neat, and so there were but few hiding-places for the chrysalis, and, therefore, we were seldom annoyed by the worm."

"You say the third generation are travelers. Do they move with any regularity?—and on account of this are they called army-worms?" Dobson inquired.

"Oh! no; as the saying is, it is 'every one for himself, and the devil take the hindmost.' I never saw any two army-worms alongside of each other, moving in the same direction. There is not the least possible concert of action, except that each one is struggling to get his fill of the, to him, delicious cotton-leaf before he dies. And while the crop is being eaten, there is a sound at dusk, when they are busiest, like that which at some distance pigs make in drinking swill, and the air is filled with a strong smell of the bleeding leaves. I don't know why they should be called army-worms," Mr. Sinton added, laughing, "unless it is that they do n't show the least resemblance to the

movements of an army, unless in that of a disgraceful rout, or in a victory where every soldier is going for pillage."

"Did you ever come upon a chrysalis in the winter?" I asked.

"Yes, in tearing down a cabin, or moving some old building, I have frequently found them hidden away in the decayed part of a log, and picking them up could feel them squirm between my fingers, showing that there was life; and sometimes I have found only the shell of the chrysalis, showing that its hiding had been of no avail.

"There is another destructive enemy to the cotton, called the boll-worm This worm only operates on the boll, boring its way into its very heart, and stinging it to death; attacking only the half-grown bolls, these being the tenderest. In this way the entire fruit on a stalk may be destroyed, while the stalk itself continues growing. They are produced substantially as is the army-worm, but winter over differently, crawling into the cracks of the dry cotton-stalks. On this account cotton-stalks should always be pulled up by the roots and burned, instead of broken down and plowed under.

"Have you noticed any of the boll-worms yet?"

"Yes, sir; there are a few of them at work in our fields."

We fell in love newly with Mr. Sinton's plantation. His work was as nearly complete as the imperfectly working negro could make it. There was consummate management displayed every-where on his place. Evidently his knowledge of cotton was perfect. It would be impossible to express in words our admiration of this man, not only as a man, but as a cotton-grower. As his statements indicate, he was as familiar with the army-worm as the most thoroughly informed stock-raiser could be with his cattle.

We returned home disgusted with Hebron, its management and our ignorance, and pushed our worm destruction with a desperate energy, as if that would give us

healthy growing cotton-fields, clear of grass and weeds, cleaned-out ditches, and tidy ditch-banks, such as we had just seen at Mr. Sinton's.

By the time we had destroyed this crop of worms, what with the nibbling of the leaves by the worm, and the tearing and crushing of them by the paddles, our fields had an exceedingly ragged look. It was as if they had been smitten by a hail-storm.

Desirous of fully informing ourselves, and verifying Mr. Sinton's statements as to the worm, Dobson pulled off some leaves, which had on their under-side some millers' eggs (they always lay their eggs on that side of the leaf), about quarter the size of a grain of mustard-seed, and looking like little warts. These he took to our cabin, and put them under a glass, when we saw some of the eggs hatch, the worms grow to full size, and then each go into the chrysalis. By supplying them with fresh cotton-leaves each day, we could see how they fed, and, having the chrysalis under our eye, we would know the exact period it took to hatch the miller.

One morning, upon looking at the chrysalis, I found a small army of ants preying upon them, and upon examination found they had actually eaten through the shell, and were feeding on the embryo miller. A number of the chrysalids had actually been destroyed. The ants had found their way under the glass, through a crack in the wood.

I at once changed the location of the remaining chrysalids, and fixed the glass so that the ants could not possibly get under it again. But here was a discovery. The country was full of ants. Why, having found our chrysalids with difficulty, were they not ravaging upon those on the cotton-stalks in the field, which they could easily reach? No sooner had the thought suggested itself, than I hurried out to make examination.

"God bless the ants!" I exclaimed, involuntarily, for

here they were, actually at work on the chrysalids, which had escaped the observation of our laborers. I could easily trace them, by their line of march, up and down the cotton-stalk, where their vigilance had detected a concealed chrysalis, and which they had attacked, broken through the shell, and were busily feeding upon its vitals. And it seemed, indeed, to be a grand feast for them. I eagerly examined stalk after stalk where the ants were, only to find a repetition of my first discovery. They were on a single errand, that day, to fill themselves out of the army-worm chrysalis.

Searching closely, I found quite a number which they had already emptied. The work was apparently being done with a faithfulness attesting the proverbial industry of the ant. I remembered how often, in the sandy portion of our land, I had seen our plows sweep ruthlessly through the ant-hills, tearing to pieces in a moment their homes, which had cost them so much labor. In sight of their present service, my conscience smote me. I grew childish, and found myself saying: "Dear, kind ants, this is the way you repay us for breaking up your nests. Well, it shall never be done again. Go ahead, now, and make a grand ant's-nest of Hebron, if you want to." And then I took up one in my hand to fondle it, and it bit me of course!—which brought me to my senses, and I hurried off home to share with Dobson my discovery.

"Eureka!" I shouted to him, as I came up to our cabin, and saw him sitting on the gallery.

"What is the matter, Mr. Harding," inquired Dobson, after he had slapped away two or three times, very deliberately, at a shy but apparently very hungry musquito, which managed each time to elude the blow, but as often renewed the attack.

"Matter! why the country is swarming with a deadly

enemy to the army-worm chrysalis, and a general attack is now being made."

"What do you mean?" inquired the General, a little anxiously, still not percipitately, but with a look which said, "Is the man crazy?"

Then, as coherently as I could in my excited condition, I explained to Dobson what the reader already knows, showing him, for verification, his own dilapidated chrysalids. "Only think—these ants that we 've been crying out against all summer, because they would get into our brown sugar, are to be our salvation. After this I love—a red bug; I love—a musquito; yes, I love—a buffalo-gnat. *They* will prove to be of service yet. I 'll never say again that either the smallest, most venomous or disgusting thing, with life in it, was not made for a purpose. Hurrah! I am in love with the country, because it is full of insects—especially ants. If we ever get rich here, it will be due to the ant, and if then we have a coat-of-arms, it shall show two of them rampant."

"Hold on, there, Mr. Harding; wait till the time comes for the millers to hatch out, and if, then, after all the feasting of the ants, there are not still enough millers left to lay enough eggs to hatch worms enough to destroy our crop, I 'll join you in praise of all insects—especially ants, as you say."

"Go out in the fields, and see for yourself, General, and if you do n't return feeling, as I do, that it is the first thorough work we have had done this year, I shall be disappointed."

"If there is any thing in it, it follows that while the gods may not help those who do n't help themselves, the ants do—because, of course, they are in our neighbors' fields, who have refused to turn a hand toward the destruction of the army-worm, and they will be benefited equally with us. But," continued Dobson, "I must go and take a look for myself."

"Yes," I said, "the sanguine member of the partnership is convinced; go and see how it impresses the conservative member."

"And when we have compared statements, we will strike an average," Dobson added, good naturedly, "which will be near the truth."

The General returned from his inspection quite impressed, saying: "It certainly looks as if they were doing thorough work. But it is all very odd; I can hardly realize it. What a fine thing it would be, if, after all, the ant were to be our salvation."

"Pretty good for you, Mr. Cautious. The average, then is ——?"

"There is strong hope," answered Dobson.

"Adopted," was my reply.

Here, then was a double dependence—on the work of the paddles and that of the ants. It must be confessed, at that moment we both felt that there was more to be expected from the latter than the former—first, because of its thoroughness; next, because it must be general. It was a slender thread to hang a hope upon—the help of the ants—and, compared to our out-start, what a fall!

CHAPTER LXIV.

WINE.

Notwithstanding General Dobson's indoor life, and use of an umbrella, he began to look sallow. It was clear that he was feeling the enervating influence of the climate. I thought him a good singer; though when I told his wife so, on her return in the fall, she laughed, saying:

"I think you must have been easy to satisfy, if Dobson's singing pleased you."

He was always willing to sing for me, and, sometimes, after we had ourselves tucked away under the bars for the night, with the lights out, I would call out:

"If you are not too sleepy, sing something."

My favorite song was "Benny Haven," which, to my mind, the General sang with fine feeling. He said he was of Scotch-Irish descent, which perhaps accounted for his throwing so much soul into it.

At night the swarming mosquitos joined in with their notes, only the key was jerky, easing off, as it did, when they were about to settle for a bite; and coming out with an angry "ping," like the sound of a tuning-fork, when they were suddenly driven from their feast.

After the sallow appearance in his face, there soon came a quaver in his voice when he sang. Sadly but eloquently did this tell of the serious strain to which a summer in this swamp-country subjects one.

"Somebody else I know of is getting a weak voice," I said, laughingly, remembering the fun the General had been making of mine.

"Yes, indeed," he replied, trying to clear his throat, as if he thought the trouble there; "it looks as if the music would be left to the birds, frogs, and insects, if indeed they do n't lose their voices, too, before this long summer is over. It may be fancy, but it seems to me that their annoying notes are already weakening."

"I wish that could happen, except to the mocking-bird. His note is as welcome to me as your singing. I think we could dispense with all the rest, especially the owls and turtle-doves."

"Include the mosquitos and frogs by all means. Thanks for your compliment in classing me with the mocking-bird."

"Do you know," Dobson said, after a moment of silence,

"I have been thinking that some light kind of wine would be a good thing for us as a daily tonic—something to drink after our meals."

"Wine and bean-soup, bah!" I replied with my squeaking voice, and with all the disgust which even the thought of bean-soup excited in me.

"We should probably enjoy our bean-soup, if we could have our systems toned up by wine. Claret, you know, is the great drink here. I am of the opinion, notwithstanding Mr. Sinton's views, that there are times when we require something stronger than coffee. I think such is our case now."

"It is customary to regard wine as a luxury; that is, wine for a steady diet. You know, General, how low we are in funds. If we can get along without it, I think we should try and do so. I really don't know where the money would come from to pay for it."

"I have thought of that too; but before a great while the picking season will commence, and shortly thereafter we shall have cotton to ship. We shall then need a merchant. Why not select him now, and order a cask of claret—he to pay himself for the same out of our cotton shipments."

"In other words, you propose to ask an advance of a cask of claret from some New Orleans cotton factor on our prospective crop."

"Yes, that was my idea. It can't cost a great deal; perhaps not over the value of a bale of cotton."

"Well, go ahead; but it is scarcely practicing as we preach. You know the fun we've made at several of our neighbors who, it was understood, had to borrow money to commence their crops, and who, according to estimates, have spent only about sixty-six per cent. of their loans for that purpose, the rest going for poker, whisky, and fast living. And then there was that half-starved negro, who came along the other day, and to whom we gave the job-

of cleaning-up around the gin-house, to be paid for in rations, and who insisted in spending seventy-five cents of the amount in whisky, leaving only twenty-five cents for meat and meal. These facts, as we thought, illustrated the improvidence of the Southerner and his late slave. And yet you propose to secure a factor in New Orleans, and commence by asking him to loan us money with which to purchase wine!—this too, in view of our sorry crop-prospect, and of our second payment, of $29,700, due in February, on Hebron.

"Of course we can get the wine. Any factor will loan us the value of a cask of claret, with our crop as a pledge; but if we are going to borrow even this small sum, we had best, for sake of effect, practice a little deception—spend it for a legitimate purchase, say pork, and then draw from our slender purse to pay for the claret. We don't want the firm of Dobson, Harding & Co. to be rated 'doubtful,' as it would be, in New Orleans, if the first loan it asked for was to purchase claret."

"Oh, I think you are over sensitive, Mr. Harding. I don't believe loans are criticised in that way in New Orleans."

"Don't doubt it, General; no matter how rich a man may be reputed to be, his orders are taken as a key to his ultimate business success—if they are hap-hazard, and for illegitimate uses, the verdict of 'doubtful' goes against such a name, and in nine cases out of ten it is correct."

"But, in my judgment, we need the wine, and therefore would not put the loan to illegitimate use."

"That is very well to say, to ease one's conscience—just as those by whom we are surrounded, who borrow money and spend a large portion of it illegitimately, say, 'Oh, we can't do without whisky, we must play poker, ride on steamboats, and have our frolics in New Orleans. These make our life and happiness, and save us from dull times.' And yet such a life is none the less the road alike to ruin

and bankruptcy. The theory that a man has a right to do as he pleases with borrowed money, is what has buried the lands in the South under a mountain of mortgages. It is this which has made her people so many communities of bankrupts. The war did not load New Orleans with her twenty millions of mortgages. It found the load already there. From what I was told by an English banker at Vicksburg, when I was down there after labor, I am satisfied that the smaller half of this indebtedness went to legitimate uses; that, in fact, the debt was the result of years of illegitimate expenditures—expenditures commenced with quite as harmless intentions, and as many reasons therefor, as you now have for our proposed purchase. You know, General, it is the first false step that makes the others easy."

"Yes, I know that; but don't you think our crop will justify this single extravagance, if you choose to consider it such, and leave enough for our second payment and current expenses another year?"

"A thousand times, no. Besides, what answer do you suppose our old banker, Mr. Cooper, would make if you applied to him for a loan with which to purchase wine?"

"I suppose he would tell me, if I had n't the money in hand to spare from my business to purchase wine, I had better do without it," replied Dobson, laughingly.

"Precisely so; he would refuse you the loan, at the same time knowing you to be amply responsible for the amount sought, and then he would ever after distrust you for offering to borrow money for such a purpose."

"Oh, well, that is in the North; it is hardly fair to compare the two sections."

"That is just to the point. It is this rule, running through business in the North, as fixed as the laws of the Medes—that money can only be borrowed for legitimate uses, and that it must be put to such uses exclusively—which has made the North a success. It is the very oppo-

site of this which put the South in the horrible financial condition in which the war found it. Never, never, will the South be a financial success, so long as the planters here can pledge their crops for whisky, poker, fast living, or any other purpose than the absolute supplies necessary to make a crop, which of course include legitimate family expenses. The same economy and business rules are required here to make a financial success that are required in the North. It is the same dollar which you borrow, and if you take it for the ostensible purpose of cotton-raising, and use only thirty-three cents for that, wasting the remaining sixty-six, those thirty-three cents will have to earn you one hundred and eight cents to enable you to return your loan, principal and interest. At the end of the year a full crop of cotton, at present prices, would do this; but where is your full crop?"

"I regret to say, it is not on Hebron," Dobson replied, with a lengthening face.

"No, nor any-where else in the South. Cotton is high because it is scarce. We know now that it is not a crop that grows of itself. If such had been the case, your estimate would have been realized, and we should be in a fair way to be happy, I suppose. But I tell you, General, the more I see of cotton, as the season advances, the more I am satisfied there is money in it. No such sum as you figured, of course," I said, laughing ruefully, "but a reasonable amount, with the same economy which any other legitimate enterprise requires.

"There are weeds to be gotten rid of elsewhere than in our fields—they are in the hearts and habits of all classes of people here. Our ditches are choked up, and hence there is no drainage to our flat plantations; and so we have stagnant pools, sickness, death, with sour, dead land, producing a puny crop. There are white ways and negro ways that must be mended, at the same time that our ditches are cleared out, before success will come to us. There is to

be no realization of the Dobson scheme—at least this year's estimate will never be realized; but, if we are laying some sort of a foundation for the future, our labor will not have been in vain."

"You'd better say, erecting a mill,—because, to use a mining phrase, the wealth of this country does not now lie in nuggets, to be gathered in rude sluice-ways, as was the case during the war when it was full of cotton, in bales, worth four hundred dollars a-piece—but it is in quartz, and has to be crushed out. By the time we get our errors crushed out, and correct notions crushed into us, with the weeds removed from the land, I fear we shall be worn out." As Dobson said this, his face became still more pallid, as if even the thought of what might be a long journey made him tired.

"May be so; but I am desperately in earnest in my desire that, meanwhile, we shall not fall into these wretched Southern ways. A man who preaches against vice should be proof against it. Why, look at that planter, Hunt, our neighbor. Reputed to be the wealthiest man in the country, having three plantations here, and two or three others in different portions of the State; and yet each one of them mortgaged for a part of the original purchase money, and then mortgaged again to some New Orleans factor for advances—even the homestead, which has been in the family thirty years. Not a single place paid for. They were all under full cultivation before the war, stocked with slaves and commanded by overseers. The story of this man's wealth you know we have heard, a dozen times, from different ones. It was of the English banker at Vicksburg I learned it. 'He was never worth a dollar,' said he. 'He held the titles to several plantations, but they were not paid for. He simply owned the six feet which the poorest menial on the face of God's earth owns,' was the banker's closing comment. As corroborative of this, I learned at the village the other day, that he had

surrendered all his places except those near us, and that they were likely to go. 'What for?' I asked. 'He had never paid for them, and had to give them up,' was the answer.

"Hunt, of course, raised a great deal of cotton on these places. If it was so profitable before the war, why did he not pay off his debts? Simply for the reason that there was not any more than a fair living profit in cotton production, and that the revenues from his crops were anticipated, never less than two seasons ahead. His legitimate family was maintained in an establishment in one of the border slave States, where they lived in costly style. They were understood to be drawing their support from the revenues of Hunt's cotton plantations. His reputed wealth had enabled him to marry a woman of true refinement; and their home in the border State, in the absence of its coarse master—and he was seldom there—was said to be chastely elegant. Then there was an illegitimate family on the homestead plantation here—the mother of whom was at once slave and mistress, except when the legitimate family made their occasional visits. I saw two of her daughters at the village store once. Beautiful girls they were, with scarcely a sign of the negro about them. And finally there was the plassa quadroon wife in New Orleans, with her luxurious establishment, and her offspring educated in Europe. In journeying to and from these separate establishments, Hunt's only beverage was champagne, and he would never touch a game of poker if it had a limit. It is said of him that he would not ride after hounds here—which he was passionately fond of doing—on a horse which had not cost him a thousand dollars and upwards. All his expenditures were on a par with this. Here was a man who, if his debts were paid, would not own the boots in which he stood, and this is a not uncommon sample of Southern wealth and habits."

"What a coarse, wicked, and false life it was!" said Dobson.

"Yes, indeed, it was all that. Mere extravagances may be excusable, provided it is your own money you are spending, but it is not excusable to indulge in extravagances, either on borrowed capital or on prospective profits. It is plain that the Southern practices were in violation of this rule. The South has yet to learn the first lesson in finance."

"What is that?"

"Live within your income."

"I think from what you say about men holding the titles to plantations which they have not paid for, that there is another lesson they could learn to advantage: a man really owns only what he has paid for."

"Yes, and so long as you divert the revenue of any thing from its legitimate channel—which is to discharge the debt it owes as fast as it can do so, and at the same time leave means to develop its resources—so long as an individual does that, he will be a financial failure."

My object was, if possible, to induce Dobson to abandon the idea of running in debt for a cask of claret. While it might, as he said, be of service to us, I thought it smacked strongly of falling into the custom of the country in the matter of drink, and of spending money before receiving it.

But my effort was unavailing. The General thought we ought to have the claret, and so ordered it. The following is a copy of Dobson's letter, as found in the plantation letter-book:

"Hebron Plantation, *August* 5, 1866.

"Gents:—We are the owners of the above-named place of eleven hundred acres, nine hundred acres of which are in cotton. Our chances of a crop depend upon there being no worm, and a late frost, but in any event our shipments will be considerable. We have concluded to select you as

our factors. If you are willing to serve us, please indicate the same by return mail. At the same time we will thank you to forward us by packet a cask, say twenty gallons, of some reliable brand of table claret, charging cost of same to us, and awaiting our cotton shipments to reimburse you. We shall want bagging and ties shortly—will notify you when. Very truly,

"DOBSON, HARDING & Co.

"TO CARTER & THOMPSON."

Mechanically, this effort of Dobson's, like his first, which had so captivated me, was lovely to look upon. But I groaned out, as I read it in the letter-book:

"Beautiful, but inwardly dead men's bones!"

Whereupon the General laughed, good-naturedly, saying: "No, rather life and restoration to health for us. We can stand the expenditure for a cask of claret, I am sure we can."

"It was not in your estimate, General, but neither were a good many other items. The pipes, for instance," I added, jestingly, though more than half in earnest—at which the General colored. "Pipes" was a tender subject.

As I had predicted, the claret came to hand by the return packet, with a very polite letter, consenting to serve us, and including a bill for the claret of $125, which the letter said was charged to us. The majestic steamer, "General Quitman," whose sonorous whistle could be heard on a clear day twenty miles—and which we had heard on this particular afternoon even further—finally rounded the bend below, hove in sight, and, after swinging across the river and back for fully two hours, stopping at almost every plantation landing, to leave little batches of freight and planters returning from a trip below, at last steamed up to Hebron.

It was a beautiful moonlight night, and Dobson and myself rode down to the landing to wait for the boat's arrival.

As is the custom with negroes, when out of the field, the Hebron force were at hand to watch the boat in to and out from the landing. The "Quitman" shoved her prow into the soft bank with such force that she cut a great gash in it, which remained there a long time afterward. If the bank had been rocky, instead of alluvial, the blow would have shivered her to pieces. As it was, she stuck fast to the shore, with a current of four miles an hour against her, and without any line, until the freight was off and the reversed wheels pulled her out again. It was a weird sight, as she came in to the shore with her torch of resin and pine faggots, in an iron basket at her side, casting, as it did, lurid shadows upon the water, exposing to view, under the red smoky sheet of flame, the small army of stevedores and piles of freight down on the lower deck, and, when the boat came nearer to the bank, sharply defining the outlines of the rugged shore, and bringing out under its light the waiting crowd on the bank.

As we passed down upon the deck, on our way to the clerk's desk in the cabin to pay for our freight, we could see barrels of pork, sacks of corn, barrels of corn-meal, and bales of hay, which had already traveled down this very stream from Cincinnati or St. Louis, now traveling up the river again, eloquently telling their story of the peculiar management which prevailed among the planters of the Mississippi Valley. There were also to be seen any number of kegs, demijohns, baskets, and boxes, all of them evidently containing liquor of some kind—a feature we no longer had a right to criticise, since our cask of claret had just gone up the bank. At the present rate we should in a year or two be ordering our supplies, grown in the West, from New Orleans.

We went up into the cabin, and there, hanging over the bar, taking a drink, were the companions of our first trip down the river, Parker and Southland. They looked so natural, that it seemed a continuation of our first journey,

but when I directed Dobson's attention to them my cracked voice recalled my wandering fancy. Others were jostling their way either to or from the bar. There were two tables of card-players, a man writing letters, others lounging or chatting, all smoking, and so the scene was made up. The captain came in, taking a bee-line to the bar, where Parker and his partner still were. He was invited by the former to drink, which invitation he was not slow to accept.

There was of course a profuse display in the bar and clerk's office of Confederate Generals, while at the head of the boat hung a likeness of General Quitman, of Mexican war fame, whose name the steamer bore.

The officers of the boat were all polite to us, but there was a great deal of staring at the "Yankees," by the passengers. Our status was evidently understood. Southland was especially savage, as he leered at us, and his right hand went under his coat-tail, as if in search of something.

Upon the bank again, we took the first good look at our cask of claret.

"Here is health for us," Dobson exclaimed.

"There is rather the beginning of indebtedness to a New Orleans cotton-factor. We are known now in that city, and our crop is mortgaged," I said, somewhat snappishly, I fear.

It was a foreign-looking object, which our eyes rested on. The hoops were wrapped with something resembling split willow. The barrel was very small at each end, bulging out prominently in the center. There was a wooden stave across one end, and some letters were burned upon it, which Dobson said was the brand of the claret. On the other end was our address. Altogether it was a very stylish barrel, and as Dobson rolled it over to inspect it, there came a gurgle, which he declared to be a mighty pleasant sound. Billy

had the cart at the landing, into which the cask was lifted and at once carried to our quarters.

We ought to have prepared ourselves for bottling the claret on its arrival, by ordering the necessary bottles and corks forwarded with it. But we did not know this; and, accordingly, what we did do was to prepare it for use precisely as a barrel of cider is prepared. We bored a hole in one end of the cask, in which we put a common cider faucet, and then placed the cask on its side, on blocks, in our little cabin closet, at the side of the chimney. Having a little fire on the hearth, as we had night and morning, thus warming up the chimney, this was not just the coolest place we could find, but in view of the fact that negroes generally have a weakness for liquor, and that George had a particular weakness for it, this was the safest place at our disposal. Here, under lock and key, and drawing it ourselves, there was no danger of its being meddled with.

If it had been our intention to make an excellent article of wine-vinegar, we had hit upon the precise location and plan. There was the gimlet-hole, which we bored near the bung, to admit air, and there was the gentle warmth of the chimney.

At first we drank the wine with zest; then it seemed to have a stale flavor, which Dobson attributed to our lack of a cultivated taste rather than to any fault of the wine. Finally, it became decidedly sour. But, notwithstanding this, we continued to drink it, not suspecting its actual condition, and determined to think it our own defective taste.

One day, however, Dobson was at the village, and, having in mind the peculiar sour taste of our claret, without letting the bar-keeper know the purpose of his inquiry, he learned from him what was the trouble. The wine had turned to vinegar. It was agreed to keep the matter a profound secret.

If you want to make Dobson color to the roots of his hair, just ask him, "How is wine-vinegar as a beverage?"

We made no further purchases of claret, but we had an excellent article of wine-vinegar on hand, as an asset, when we came to invoice at the end of the season; besides having made a beginning in running a New Orleans account which, like most planters' accounts with their factors, would doubtless grow to be a ponderous affair on the debtor side.

CHAPTER LXV.

LUMBER—DISAPPOINTED HOPES.

Between the second and third generations of the worm, was another brief respite for our laborers. Some little time previous, Colonel Grey had returned from his furlough, which, not needing him, and not wishing to inflict any more of our hard experience upon any one than was absolutely necessary, and he desiring to have more time at home, we had extended indefinitely. He was occupying a room in one of the negro cabins, and putting up courageously, like the true soldier he was, with our rude plantation fare.

There was nothing for him to do in the line of farming, so he expressed a desire, as soon as we could spare him the necessary hands, to get to sawing. We were more than ever anxious for him to do so, since our cotton-crop warned us that, even under favorable conditions as to the worm and frost, we should need outside help to make our second payment, and supply ourselves with funds for the next year's current expenses.

Our earnest hope was that the saw-mill would be this auxiliary. In consequence, we came to look upon our two hundred acres of wood-land with something of that feeling

of relief, which is experienced by a commanding officer, desperately pressed in battle, when reinforcements come to his rescue. Those tall trees out there, we thought, were so many soldiers, ready to give up their lives to save our enterprise from the disaster which sorely threatened it. True, we had never inspected them, to see what kind of timber we possessed, but General Hampson had stated that it was fine timber-land, and we had never doubted his statement. By this time, however, we had learned that the only timber of much value for lumber in our locality was cypress, and that it was exceedingly valuable, being a cross of pine and cedar. We had also learned to recognize this tree, by its peculiar scraggy top. Mr. Sinton had pointed out what he termed his magnificent cypress-brake in the rear of his place, with unmistakable pride, and had told us that all his fences, etc., were of that material, adding that it was next to cedar in durability. Upon inquiry, we found that the only other timber in any way suitable, or in use, for lumber was the gum-tree, somewhat resembling the oak, though not at all like it either in durability or in the grain of the wood, and having to be kept in the dry to last for any time. It must be used green, and be very firmly nailed down to prevent it from warping fearfully.

There were, besides, to serve for lumber in desperate cases, the cotton-wood, similar to bass or linn—very soft, and, if exposed to the weather, spongy, and lasting a very short time; the hackberry, the beech-tree of the South, and an occasional sycamore.

The fact was that the only timber of commerce here was the cypress, but it was scarce, and hence valuable. Gum, cotton-wood, hackberry, and sycamore were consequently sometimes sawed up and used to help it out, for sheathing, frames, and timbers, and wherever the wood could be kept dry; and occasionally, when a planter had no cypress on his place, they were made into plank for fencing, being

put on green, as previously stated, before the boards could have time to warp.

We had examined the buildings on Hebron, and found the timbers used in them were gum, every thing else being cypress. This, and the fact of the saw-mill, with General Hampson's statement, led us to suppose there must be plenty of cypress on the place, though it was not exposed to view, as was Mr. Sinton's. We concluded, therefore, it must be in the rear of what appeared to be mostly gum-trees; and, if we were not mistaken, we could see the outlines of their scraggy tops beyond. There was one circumstance, however, which excited our distrust: The fire-wood chiefly used here was ash, and our choppers had found it very scarce. But perhaps our treatment was making us needlessly suspicious, we thought; and, because ash was scarce, it did not necessarily follow that cypress was also scarce.

We detailed our two carpenters as assistants of Colonel Grey in fixing up the mill, he finding, upon inspection, that many of the timbers were useless, having rotted away. Colonel Grey also made another discovery. Our boiler was of locomotive pattern, and the whole surface of it, called the crown sheet, where the fire struck it, seemed to be badly blistered, and, he thought, would have to be replaced by new sheets of iron. It was evident that the long rest to which the gin-house had been subjected during the war, was quite as injurious to them, in the way of rusting out machinery and rotting timbers, as was the rest to the land in producing its weed-growth and choked-up ditches. We had already found it necessary to repair our grist-mill, at considerable outlay, in anticipation of grinding our own meal when we fired-up for the ginning season. Thus the gin-house, which had seemed to be in such perfect order when General Hampson and ourselves had inspected it, was proving to be the very opposite. The engine had been last used for grinding meal for our army, and had done long and faithful service in that way, for either one

side or the other, as the fortunes of the campaigns put this locality now in Federal, now in Confederate hands.

Uncle Wash said: "De guo'ment done broke it, an' de guo'ment ought to repar it."

"Hardly that, Uncle Wash," replied Colonel Grey; "because, when the damage was done, it was owned by a Rebel Senator, and, for aught we know, it may have been injured while the country was held by the Confederates."

We sent a letter to the nearest machine-shop, at Vicksburg, describing the damage, and asking the firm to send up a boiler-maker, to look at it, with a view to repairs, if such should be necessary. In due time, a person reported—a very unprepossessing Irishman, who carried an exposed flask of whisky in his side-pocket, and a pistol under his coat, behind, like a "true Southerner"—with a letter from the Vicksburg machinists. He was accompanied by three equally disreputable-looking companions, whom, after his entrance, I saw, through our cabin-window, sitting on a strange box at the gate. They were in the act of reinforcing their spirits from a flask which seemed the partner of the one protruding from our visitor's pocket.

"Who are those people?" I asked.

"One is me pardner; the two b'ys are ribbit-holders. I brought them up with me, and a box of tools, so that we could go to work on your job at once, if we could agree as to price.

These men might be capable workmen, but without the letter they bore, from a reputedly respectable Vicksburg firm, I should not only have not considered them for a moment, but should have regarded them as disreputable characters. The necessity of the job was evidently prejudged, coming up as they did thus in force to do it. I will not tire the reader by giving in detail the disgusting dicker over the price of the work, which they placed at the enormous sum of $525, besides $90 for one little patch

two inches square. As to its necessity, after a glance, the foreman said:

"Av coorse it will have to be patched."

After they had finished the job, they went to the village to wait for a boat to take them back to Vicksburg, and while there got drunk, in which condition they boasted that they had been told by their Vicksburg employers to charge exorbitant rates, and that they had just "salivated the dommed Yankees." Their stay was a fearful experience; what, with their drinking, card-playing, nightly carousing, and intolerable filth, we were worn out. We were firm in our determination to make them do good work; but in order to get this, we had to see every rivet driven, and sometimes the work was temporarily stopped, until they were ready to go ahead as we desired. Of course I had no confidence in the integrity of their opinion, and shall never know whether the patches were really needed or not, but from a subsequent development I am inclined to think the work was not, at the time, absolutely necessary. What I allude to was this:—instead of using new iron entirely, as they should have done, for most of the work they heated up the old iron, pounded out the blisters, and put it back again; so that, as soon as we began to use the boiler, there were the old blisters again.

Such was our experience of the character of this class of labor. Think of the robbery—$615 for what ought not to have cost over $200 with entirely new iron: $615, and the old blisters back again!

What we ought to have done was to dismiss the Vicksburg gang at sight, send up to Cincinnati or St. Louis, and bring down honest, competent workmen; but this is not a story of what we ought to have done. Should we have gone into the enterprise at all if we had done *just* what we ought to have done? I must tell the reader how we got the money to pay the $615 swindle, although I blush to do so. We added it to our claret debt, by borrowing the sum

from our cotton factor! Thus it will be understood we had taken another step towards dishonesty. We were now shinning for funds in earnest. First, we had borrowed to gratify what we considered a luxury; now it was a loan to meet a necessity. It seemed as if our business downfall had set in.

Then we looked at the trees, and thought of the lumber in them, and of the ants, busy in the field upon the chrysalis, and grew hopeful. It is astonishing upon what slender threads our hopes often depend. This I say in retrospect, because we did not at the time begin to realize our condition.

I now have to record the most serious disappointment we had yet encountered. Our saw-mill was progressing to completion; a log-wagon, in Wisconsin style, was prepared; and Colonel Grey requested a squad of hands, that he might go out into the woods and procure some logs, and also a pair of our largest mules for the log-wagon. Thus he would chop and haul at once, and have logs on hand when the mill was ready, himself remaining in the woods to superintend. I made the detail as he desired, and they all started to the woods bright and early one morning (chanting plantation melodies, and charmed, as a negro always is, like a child with a new toy, at a change of work), to commence operations.

About two hours afterwards, Colonel Grey rode back with the most painful expression on his face.

"What is the matter?" I asked, frightened by his haggard, disappointed look. My first thought was that some one of the hands might have been injured, perhaps killed, by a falling tree; so I added:

"Is anybody hurt?"

"No, sir, not that; but I have been all through your woods and can 't find a single cypress tree."

I looked at Dobson. His rubicund features had suddenly assumed a pale hue, under which his face was ghastly.

"What do you think of this?" I gasped out.

"Oh, God!" he at once answered, "it can't be true—it is too cruel to contemplate."

"There must be some mistake," he added, as if trying to convince himself; and then he looked pitifully, but inquiringly, into Colonel Grey's face, as if he would ask, "Don't you think there is some mistake?" but he hesitated, as if fearful to do so, because the answer might be, was almost certain to be, against him.

"I wish I could think there was a mistake," said Colonel Grey, very gravely, "but I have made what I regard a thorough reconnoissance, and you have my report."

"But hark, Colonel! did you not hear that crash? That was a falling tree. The hands must have found some cypress, after all."

Dobson's face lost a little of its distressed expression, and he added:

"Yes, that was certainly a falling tree."

Just then there was another similar sound, and my spirits immediately rose, but only for an instant, as Colonel Grey at once said:

"Those are gum-trees. Failing to find cypress, I put the laborers to chopping them down, until I could report to you the condition of things, and ask you to ride out and see for yourselves. I thought we might find a market for a little gum lumber."

This was the thing for us to do, see for ourselves; so ordering our horses, we mounted and rode, sadly enough, to the woods.

It is needless to say that Colonel Grey's statement was fully confirmed. There were fifteen or twenty cypress trees, on what we thought might be an upper corner of Hebron; they were those which we had seen outlined, and which had served to allay our suspicions; but, upon examination, they were found to belong to the plantation above; and not only this, but we could not find, though we

scoured our woods, a single ash-tree either—and, as if disappointments would never cease, we also discovered that the ash which our hands had cut for the ginning, etc., was not on Hebron at all!

With heavy hearts, we turned the heads of our horses homeward, telling Colonel Grey to go on and chop down a lot of the gum-trees; having no cypress, we would see what could be done with gum lumber—it might be only a fiction about its being so warpy. Thus did we grasp at this straw.

Dobson's face wore a savage look.

"The fates are against us," he muttered. "Whichever way we turn we find deception, black and damnable, as our portion. Fine timber-land!" he exclaimed, with a sarcastic curl to his lip; "we have just gone over it, and what do we find? Ridges of gum-trees, matted with a growth of cane and blackberry-bushes; sloughs full of moccasin-snakes, fringed with willow-trees, water-oaks, here and there a pecan, persimmon, sycamore, or cotton-wood; without ash enough to boil a tea-kettle, or cypress enough to make our coffins, which, from present indications, we shall soon need."

"Splendid picking for a saw-mill that! Where do you suppose Hampson got his cypress?" I asked; "he never found it on Hebron. There is a trick somewhere, and, as usual, *we* are the victims. I am going to send for Cato, and find out what he knows about it."

"That is n't going to give us fine timber-land, such as Hampson told us we were buying," said Dobson, now fallen into a gloomy mood.

"No, but there will be some satisfaction in knowing the facts."

That evening Cato reported. The sum of his information was that his late master bought a raft of cypress logs somewhere above, had them floated down against the Hebron levee in the season of high water, which was the

way he got his cypress for the Hebron buildings, but that there never was a stick of cypress grown on Hebron, "plum pintedly."

I never dreamed that General Dobson could be so powerfully affected as he was by this discovery, nor could he have been by this alone; but coming, as it did, in addition to the other sore disappointments and trials, which had continued to strike us, blow after blow, it was the last straw; and then, poor man, he was far from well; his sallow face and sunken eyes told eloquently of the effect which this semi-tropical region, with our wretched preparations for enduring it, was having upon him. The fact of General Dobson's taking this last blow so much to heart, together with his failing physical condition, served to distract for the time my own mind from brooding over our common cause for grief.

There must always, if a calamity befall two, sharing alike the same fortune, be the sufferer and the assuager. The latter's task, the harder one of the two to discharge, this time fell to me.

But my attempted words of cheer sounded hollow, and, indeed, they were as unsubstantial as a building without foundation.

They were, "Courage! courage! General, we shall succeed yet," while from the outlook there were no grounds for courage, save the slender one that the ants, supplementing our worm-slaughter, might destroy the chrysalis, and so save us further infliction from the worm.

Thus, whereas, at the outset of our enterprise, our sky was beset with stars, now but a single one remained, if, indeed, it was any thing more than a will-o'-the-wisp.

I am now speaking of the crop of 1866, because I never doubted our ultimate success in cotton-planting. No, never in our darkest moments did I doubt that; the doubt was whether we should be able to hold on until that happy time.

Of course, each one of the many robberies which had been inflicted on us—each one of our own many mistakes, resulting from ignorance—had made us less able financially to hold out, and each one had helped to take the heart out of us, too.

CHAPTER LXVI.

DOBSON'S DISCOURAGEMENT—OLD CLARA'S COMFORT.

It was painful to witness Dobson's writhing under this last infliction;—it really seemed as if another blow would crush him, and yet there it was, impending, in the probable destruction of our crop by the army-worm.

We sat, the evening of the day of our last disappointment, in our cabin, brooding over the trying situation. Our rude dinner had been carried away by George, almost untasted, including the claret, which was growing wretchedly sour. We were smoking our pipes in silence. Long since our last cigar had disappeared, to be replaced by pipes, with black navy tobacco, the same the negroes were chewing. We had each our plug, and whittled off our pipes full, each crumbling it in the hollow of his left hand, with his right-hand thumb, in true Southern style.

George had taken the dishes out upon the gallery for Mary, who occasionally helped him, to wash them, and he was now sleeking-up the room, trying to make it look cheerful. But Mary, on the gallery, with her sleeves rolled up, in her pink gown, and with her sweet face, was the only cheerful object in sight, though George's devotion was not less marked than Mary's beauty.

Visiting an adjoining plantation, I had once seen in a negro cabin an elaborate oval gilt mirror, which had doubtless been taken surreptitiously during the war from the residence of some planter. I was struck with the incongruity of this elegant piece of furniture with such rude surroundings. Mary's presence recalled this looking-glass. Anxious to turn our thoughts away from their gloomy channels, I related the incident to Dobson, and, continuing, said:

"What a strange war it was, the fortunes of which placed a French mirror in that cabin, and made this woman the wife of that negro. The war robbed the mirror of its place, but it has given the woman hers. The mirror *was* out of place, the woman only *seems* so, because of the bleaching process through which she has passed, the result of her white graft."

A long discussion followed, in which I was the chief speaker, Dobson making only a brief remark, or answering a question, occasionally, concerning the mixture of races under the institution of slavery, a striking result of which was the pink-cheeked beautiful mulatto woman at her menial service on our gallery, when a knock was heard at the door, and Aunt Clara entered. Her great black shining face glistened upon us, the soul of good nature and perfect health. We greeted Clara with the customary "howdy?" to which she responded, with a graceful curtsey, and answered, "poo'ly."

"What is it, Aunt Clara?" I asked.

Dobson had by this time relapsed into his mood of desperate gloom, from which our talk had somewhat rallied him.

Looking at the General, she replied: "De black folks 's bin tellin' you 's had a pow'ful dissap'intment 'bout de cypress, an' de Gen'l da' looks 's if he war jes' done out wi'd it, and Clary come'd aroun' to tell yo' she 's mighty sorry 'bout it."

The General looked up when Clara spoke of him, and had continued looking as if it were impossible to resist gazing into a face which expressed so much sympathy.

"Thank you, Clara," he replied, "I don't doubt your feeling sorry, but there is no help for it."

"No, sa', it can't be helped; dat is, de cypresses can't be sot dar in de woods; but, Gen'l," continued Clara, perching her head on one side as if she were now about to say something worth hearing, "heah me; de white folks in dis country would n't buy a single lo'd of lumber of you to sabe yo' souls, an' dat 's de truf, plum pintedly. Ole Clary heerd you was greevin' might'ly, an' she jes' could n't 'sist de temptation to come up heah an' tell yo'. Now, da'," she added, heaving a long breath of relief, "Clary feels better; she 'll go. Good night, Gen'l; good night, Mr. Harding."

We looked at each other inquiringly a full minute after her departure.

"What do you think of Clara's idea, General?" I finally asked.

"I am afraid it is too true," replied Dobson, shaking his head with a grave face, but from which the gloom was lifting. Then he suddenly added, with an angry flash of the eye:

"What fools we were to suppose we could find patronage for our lumber in the midst of a people where there is such a despotism of opinion that even the best disposed towards us do not treat us decently, for fear they will be charged with a sympathy for Yankees. Buy lumber of us? No, old Clara was right; her mother-wit is worth all our knowledge—we could n't sell a stick of lumber."

"Unless," I interrupted his paroxysm to say, "we should advertise to do a credit business, in which case, I suppose we could sell as much lumber as Mr. Sinton has in his cypress brake, if we had that much sawed."

"Oh, yes; they 'd buy lumber of us on credit, and then never pay for it," replied Dobson, bitterly, "just as they have borrowed our pork, and do n't return it. If they won 't pay a debt of honor, how is it to be expected that they would pay one incurred in the ordinary run of business?"

"May be they do n't consider any debt, with 'Yankees' situated as we are, one of honor."

"But it is a wonder it never occurred to us before that there was no chance of our finding a market here for lumber," Dobson continued, after a moment's thought.

"Well, no, not so much of a wonder, when you remember that this lumber scheme was started early in the season, before we fully realized the extent of hostility towards us, and that it was finally taken up as a last resort for us in our desperate straight."

"Yes, yes!" Dobson replied, his head falling upon his breast, with an air of utter hopelessness, "that is so."

George came in now to prepare for our nightly bath.

"Never mind about my bath, George," Dobson said. "There is nothing worth living for here," and then, heart-sick, and sick in body, my poor companion went off to bed, not to rest, but to tumble and fret the night through, and to show himself still more haggard in the morning.

In explanation of Gen. Dobson's sinking under our late blow, while I did not, it is proper to say that, while difference in temperament may have had something to do with it, the main reason, perhaps, was that he was quite a number of years my senior, and was here called upon to encounter experiences, which, in order to be endured with any complacency, should be met in earlier life.

Dobson had left behind him those years, filled with enthusiasm, hope, trust and confidence, which come into the life of every one when he first passes the threshold of manhood—the close of which, if he is successful, finds him with

refined judgment, self-confident and happy; if otherwise, with distrust of his ability and bitterness of heart.

Dobson's age, with his experience, and hence ripened judgment, led him to the conclusion that we were hopelessly lost; therefore, he was crushed, overwhelmed, while my age, and immature judgment, enabled me only to see a grave situation, which demanded and inspired me to greater endeavor. It was given to him to look into the past as well as to the future, and if there was no fruit in the retrospect or prospect, the effect just described naturally followed; while my life was all in the future, and if no fruit was in sight, I could say, with the happy trust of my years, this is the planting season—it is too soon to expect fruit. This I say now, with Dobson's years upon my own head. I can now appreciate the brave, noble man's despair, as I could not then. And if I lacked in sympathy—as perhaps I did, because in the absence of experience I could not appreciate his situation—I here drop a tear, in recollection of my partner's feelings at that time.

CHAPTER LXVII.

CREDIT *vs.* CASH.

NEGROES are almost universally both chewers and smokers, including a large percentage of the women, and their consumption of navy-tobacco, which they used for both purposes, was very great. Another item of heavy expense to those on our plantation was their shoes, though in the order of expense probably whisky should come first. As for clothing, their out-fit, like Joseph's coat, was generally patchwork. The negro has no disposition to cast off a garment

when a hole appears in it; on the contray, it is to patch and patch, until the last vestige of the original garment disappears, in which condition it is, for the first time, in its glory.

A good many of the wants of our laborers we supplied by purchases at the village store. In consequence, our trade at that place was a considerable item. Every week I would have to go down and buy brogans, navy-tobacco, etc., for which I always paid cash, our names never appearing once during the season on the books of the village merchant, although I was frequently told not to be particular about paying at the time of purchase. Our credit, like that of all new-comers, was *par excellence*. I am not aware of any other point of seeming advantage on the part of our class, but it is a fact that we were looked upon as having an abundance of money, and though Southern people would not fraternize with us, they would sell us any thing. For it was freely admitted that they were generally short of funds, and nothing was more fashionable in their circles than to plead poverty as the result of the war.

We almost always found Southern people at the store purchasing similar articles to those we were buying, but unlike us, they were generally having them charged—to be paid for out of their crop.

In the course of the season, it gradually leaked out that the village merchant was charging us the same price for our cash purchases that he was charging other planters for their purchases on credit.

All along we had regarded these prices as excessive. For instance, we paid for navy-tobacco by the caddy, which was the form in which we bought it, $1.25 cents per pound. And we paid for every thing else in the same proportion. Thus, for every dollar we were expending, the merchant was making from fifty to sixty cents profit.

I had not thought much about this matter early in the season, while I was counting on the Dobson estimate, but as

the year advanced, and our prospect waned, I came to regard it as a serious matter, and finally complained to the merchant about his prices, and the fact that he did not discriminate in favor of our cash purchases.

"Buying, as we do, tobacco by the caddy, and shoes by the dozen, our purchases are in the nature of wholesale, and paying you cash, as we do, you ought to sell us very low."

"My dear sir," he replied, "we can't afford to sell you any lower than we do. We have to sell to most of the planters on long time. A good many of them never pay us at all. Unless we get big prices from our good customers it would be impossible to make any money."

Shocked at his statement, which had not a single principle of correct business in it, I exclaimed:

"What is this, but making what you call your good customers pay for the goods purchased by the many who never pay?"

"Oh, well, that is one view to take of it; but really, sir, when we come to charge up the heavy losses, our profits are none too large."

"Why don't you stop trusting those who make your losses?"

"They would get mad, raise a row, most likely shoot—and I don't like fusses. Rather than that, I trust them. Some of them may pay, if times get better. If that happy day ever comes, when every body here pays his debts, we can sell goods cheaper; until then we have got to charge up."

"But the effect of this, when rightly understood, will be to drive off your good customers; for clearly you are making them pay your losses on the poor ones to whom you say you are afraid to refuse credit. That is an awful condition of things, when a man, pecuniarily irresponsible, can force a merchant to sell him goods—that merchant all but certain that he will never get his pay. I don't see any difference between this and the highway rob-

ber's motto; the one is, 'Your money or your life;' the other is, "Your goods or your life,—your goods, which, all the same, are money; and then you depredate your good customers to make up your losses," I said, trying to be good-natured in my deservedly severe remarks.

"It is nothing new. This is the way we did business before the war; only it is likely to be worse now than then —our losses, I mean."

"Do n't you think you could select your customers, refusing those whom you do n't consider good?"

"I should n't like to try it," he said, significantly, 'though we may be forced to do it from lack of money to go on. You know when this season opened we all had great hopes. We got free credit in New Orleans; we gave free credit here. Now, that the out-look is so poor, New Orleans is shutting down on us, and we may have to do the same with our customers.

"Well, I do n't know how it may strike others who deal with you and pay cash, but we certainly can not afford to pay you prices to enable you to make up your losses by your credit customers, nor will we do it. If this is your programme, and you will not deviate from it, much as we regret, we shall have to withdraw our custom. We can, of course, buy goods as cheap as you can, which we will have to do, opening up a full line of necessities on the plantation, and thus coming in contact with your trade, because, if we open a store, we shall aim to sell to the negroes on other places. I say negroes, for the reason that I would not expect your Southern white friends to patronize us, even if we should sell goods cheaper than you do. Their prejudice, we have discovered since our residence here, is so strong against us, that they would not patronize us under any circumstances; but the negro is predisposed in our favor, and would be certain to patronize us. If I am not mistaken, aside from our class of trade, he is your best customer."

"Oh, you can buy cheaper, because, having the money, you can order from either Cincinnati or St. Louis. We, having to borrow our capital in New Orleans, are compelled to buy our goods there through our factor, paying heavy commissions and New Orleans profits. You are right in supposing that next to your class the negro is our best customer. I shall be sorry to lose your custom, and have your competition, but I can't sell my goods any cheaper. I have to charge all as I do, in order to make any money. If every body paid me I could, of course, sell goods cheaper, but as it is I can not."

Such was the logic of our village merchant. I give the conversation as it occurred, in order that the reader may understand his idea—which was no doubt the characteristic one of the country at that time—of how goods should be sold.

While his utterances were foolish, they were not the utterances of a man reputed foolish himself;—on the contrary, he was regarded as the shrewdest and best business man in our section. I fear the reader will exclaim, "God help the others, if he was the best of them." So far as he was trusting men whom he knew to be poor pay, how eloquently did it tell of a despotism of opinion, as hateful as it was unwholesome. Was it possible to have a healthy condition of things in a community where such a deplorable state of affairs existed? Only think of it:—the leading village merchant afraid to refuse credit, and actually letting his goods go to men who he was absolutely certain would never pay him, because he was apprehensive they might raise a fuss or shoot—and then making up his losses on his good customers!

Did not this single wretched fact convict and condemn this locality? There may be despotisms in the old world, but I do not believe it has a parallel to that here indicated. Possibly there may be those who will say this statement is a fiction—that it is too improbable to be true; but every word of it is the truth. I have reported precisely what the

village merchant said to me, every word of which was verified by his practices. It was, moreover, corroborated by the English banker's statement, that not uncommonly, before the war, New Orleans factors continued to trust planters, frequently the leading men of their localities, when they knew they were not responsible, for fear of giving offense. The village merchant was thus only following the example of his factor—an example, I add, which was here regarded as commendable.

From this rotten state of affairs sprang the plantation stores, which in the coming years dotted the country—ours being the pioneer enterprise. Because we meant to be as good as our word, we proceeded, as soon as we could, to put our resolution into execution. We could not, nor would we, place ourselves on a par with men who did not propose to pay, or could not pay their debts, nor would we, any longer than we could help, allow the merchant to charge to our cash purchases a *pro rata* share of his bad debts, which by his own statement he was doing.

This village merchant was a sincere, honest man, and he thoroughly believed that the same price should be asked for a pair of brogans, whether the purchaser paid cash or had them charged, being almost absolutely certain at the time of sale, in the latter case, that he would never receive a cent of pay for them. If there ever was an inflexible one-price store, it was here. It was the same price, whether he sold his goods or gave them away!

Nor was he singular. This habit ran through every branch of business. It was as much the established custom as slavery had been. The purchaser practically said, "We are good, if we never pay," and the answer was, "Yes," from the party selling to him, with the practical addition, "and you seldom do pay, but all the same, come and buy." Sifted down, it was really a continuation of the ante-bellum system of unlimited credit.

The village merchant was doing business, according to

his own admission, by means of credit with the cotton factor. What cared he for money? "As long as my drafts are paid, I am all right," was his reasoning. The planter was purchasing of him in the same way. "What care I for money?" was his practical utterance—"as long as the merchant will sell, or the factor pay my drafts, I am satisfied."

Thus it was the ability to get credit, not the cash in hand, that was made the standard, and, because of this, a man was wealthy so long as he could get credit. In other words, it was not his cash receipts that fixed his financial status, but it was the drafts he could draw, and have paid, and the goods he could buy on credit—his outlay and not his income. The idea of credit ramified through every thing—individual, commercial, municipal, and state—because generally every thing and every body were buried under a mountain of debt, though but few seemed to realize it. The question was not, have we any money on hand? but will our drafts be paid—can we buy such and such articles on credit?

From this stand-point, the position of the village merchant was logical—credit, not cash, was the desideratum. Why, then, should he charge us less for cash, for which he did not care, than he charged others for credit, for which he cared every thing? Not that he did not care for cash—no, he would have resented such a suggestion; but this was the practical effect of his method of doing business. And it was not a credit based on resources, either, for it was often indiscriminate in its character. Nor was it a credit for legitimate purposes alone, because included in its uses was every vice.

It is fair to say that, while resisting the village merchant's ideas of credit, I did not forget our recent investment of our crop in claret. Thus, it may be said, we saw the evil, but had not altogether shunned it. It would be well for us if, simply tasting the fruit (wine), as we had

done, and finding it bitter, or rather sour, we should ever after abstain from further temptations.

However that might be, I then felt exceedingly virtuous and said to Dobson: "Our village merchant has driven us away from his store, as he is driving away many other prudent ones, because he insists in charging us, who do pay, the same price he charges others who do not pay."

"So far as he is doing this for fear of giving offense, he is truly to be pitied; and he is to be pitied, though in another way, for his regard for credit above cash; and he is to be pitied in still another way—for his downright ignorance of plain business rules."

CHAPTER LXVIII.

CROP DESTROYED BY ARMY-WORM—RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT.

As Mr. Sinton had predicted, the third crop of the army-worm made its appearance on the 28th of September. While we were getting out our gum-tree logs for sawing, the third crop of millers appeared. They had not seemed to be very numerous, however, and so we hoped the ants had all but succeeded in destroying the chrysalis. This went far towards restoring the tone of Dobson's feelings, after our lumber disappointment, and led us to hope that we were to be spared the last great blow: the destruction of our crop by the army-worm. If such were to be our good fortune, we felt it would repay us for all the hardships we had encountered; and as the time for the third crop of the worm approached, our anxiety, which had come to be centered in the saw-mill, was transferred to the worm.

Dobson knew just when to expect the millers in the field, from the hatching of the chrysalids which he had placed under a glass. The evening of the day which saw his prisoners out also saw their brothers flying into our room from the field, attracted by the light; and a reconnoissance, early the following morning, showed them along the ditch banks, flying out into the cotton, before the heat of the day should drive them into the shade, and busy laying their eggs.

We estimated, from the numbers of this third crop of millers, that our destruction of the worm, and the destruction of the chrysalis by the ants, had reduced the crop to about what the second one was. If this estimate was correct, we had accomplished our object in putting the increase of the worm back a generation, and might expect the third crop of the worm to be only about as numerous as the second; and if they were no more destructive than the second, no great harm would be done.

For two days we continued to hope. The weather was exceedingly hot, and the theory was that the worm did not eat during the heat of the day. His life being so brief, if there were but a few hours, morning and evening, for him to feed, he could of course accomplish much less than if the weather were rainy or cloudy, which would enable him to feed constantly.

Thus the elements seemed to be in our favor. But each day saw the number of worms increasing. The third day it became alarming, on the fourth more alarming, and on the fifth the case seemed hopeless.

The sun shone hot, but the worms did not mind it any more than the mocking-birds or the negroes. They ate voraciously all day long, traveling from stalk to stalk, each one for himself, and all seeming to be famished. As the cotton leaves, save the veins, disappeared under their steady attacks, they were to be found in the road-ways, on the ditch-banks—every-where, without the least concert of ac-

tion, no two moving in the same direction ; and when the dusk of evening came on, their eating could be distinctly heard, falling upon the ear with a low, chopping sound, while the odor of the bleeding leaves filled the atmosphere.

It is doubtful whether there were really any more worms than those of the second crop, but how different! The second crop were not particularly hungry, while these seemed to have come into the world in a starving condition, and never for an instant during their existence did they appear to be able to get their fill. The fact was, the cotton crop being so short left but little for them to feed upon. When they had taken a good square meal, there were no leaves remaining. It is my belief that if there had been a fair crop of cotton, and thus an abundance of leaves, we should not have been seriously injured by the worm visitation, and our effort to destroy them had been successful ; but the crop was not sufficient even to justify that effort.

We had demonstated, however, that the increase of the worm could be retarded a generation. This fact might be valuable for the future. In this respect, it was on a par with all our labors of the year ; for, now that the struggle was over, it was as well to acknowledge that never for an instant did we have any show for a crop.

But there had to be a beginning, and, like other pioneers, we had plowed and planted and organized our laborers, realizing and endeavoring to remedy their shortcomings and our own. If we had succeeded in redeeming our weed-ridden plantation, reforming some of the defects in our negro laborers, and gaining some knowledge of farming ourselves, thus laying the foundation of a crop in 1867, we had done all that in human reason there was any hope to expect.

Our fields, which had given us so much solicitude, alternating between hope and despair, and which a few days previous, when the millers came so sparsely, had looked so

promising, indicating that our struggle was over and that victory was at hand, now suggested a ground strewn with skeletons. But yesterday there were the growing cotton-stalks—now they were stripped of their leaves, showing here and there a mature cotton-boll, and only the dry skeletons of their former growth.

General Dobson was perfectly crushed, and fled on the first boat he could catch to the North, while Colonel Grey, seeing plainly that there was nothing left for him, hurried off, heart-sick, for his home in Wisconsin. Except Billy, mine was now the only white face remaining on Hebron.

The fate of our plantation was but the common one. The visitation of the army-worm swept like a besom of destruction over the South, and all were alike prostrated. All that we could do was to wait, now that the bolls were entirely exposed to the sun, for them to open, and then gather such portions of the crop as were ripe. There was this single illusion surviving, the hope that a good many bolls were already matured.

The reader will understand that, when this destructive visitation of the army-worm came, on each stalk were cotton-bolls in all stages of growth—from those fully matured to those from which but the day before the blossom had dropped—as well as buds and blossoms. It was only mature bolls, or those nearly mature, that would yield cotton.

The worms left the veins of the cotton-leaf untouched, and there being nothing for them to hide under when they went into the chrysalis state, they suspended themselves from those skeleton leaves, dangling like so many oblong, dark beads.

Just as the spires of flame from a conflagration are fearful to contemplate when viewed in the light of results, and yet are none the less beautiful, considered simply as a spectacle, so our cotton-stalks, while telling their sad story of destruction by the army-worm, thus stripped of all but the veins of the leaves, and festooned with chrysalids, were, as a spec-

tacle, beautiful to behold. Under the sunlight the skeleton leaves resembled lace, and the chrysalids were like strings of beads festooning the same.

In the course of the next ten days, a fourth generation of millers would hatch from the exposed chrysalis, but finding, as they would, no more cotton-leaves to feed on, and not feeding on any thing else, they would starve to death. This was a feature in the career of the worm that Mr. Sinton had not mentioned. I rode up to his place a few days after our last calamity for the purpose of mutual consolation, and was pained to learn that he had been visited with a double calamity, the greater of which it was hard to determine—one was the worm-destruction, the other was drought.

The front of Mr. Sinton's plantation was a sandy loam, which is a soil easy of cultivation, and in which the cotton grows rapidly and freely, early in the season, but is apt to burn out without occasional rains. When this sandy soil gets too dry the cotton begins to shed its blossoms, and its partly-formed bolls shrivel and dry up—from which time no more fruit is formed—this, too, while the leaves may be fresh, and the stalk growing. But after awhile, if the drought continues, the leaves begin to shrivel, further growth of the stalk is arrested, in time the leaves fall off, and the plant seems to die. But from the moment it begins to shed its blossoms, though the stalk itself may grow, its only service is to ripen the bolls which were already well-formed before the shedding of the blossoms began.

Sometimes the drought is ended before the stalk dies, in which case it will continue to grow, reaching a large size, but with only the fruit on it which was made before it first commenced to dry up.

In the black, or "buck-shot" land the crop begins slow, but will make almost without rain, never burning out. The black land is the best for cotton, growing and fruiting as it does until arrested by worm or frost.

It was this sandy-land cotton, beautiful to behold early in the season, but very apt to burn out, as above described, and thus an uncertain crop, which had so filled our eye with admiration during the two previous visits we had made to Mr. Sinton's place.

This fine-looking crop had met its not uncommon fate, and there was less fruit on it than on his black-land cotton, which the worm had eaten up.

"How did you come out with your preparation for killing the worm? Did you use it?"

"Oh, yes; we used it," said Mr. Lothard, laughing and blushing at the same time.

"Did it kill the worm?"

"Lothard, you might as well tell Mr. Harding the joke. It will get out any way," said Mr. Sinton, with mischief in his eye.

"Yes, I guess we better tell on ourselves."

"On yourself, you 'd better say."

"I believe I *was* the author of the discovery. Well, yes, it killed the worm, but it killed the cotton also."

"Mr. Lothard went out before breakfast and had a couple of acres sprinkled, and went back after breakfast to see the result; and I think we have some sprinkling-cans for sale now, have we not?" This Mr. Sinton added to his partner's statement, with the keenest relish, good naturedly enjoying Mr. Lothard's discomfiture.

As an offset, I told how the worm catastrophe on Hebron had sent Dobson off to the North, as well as Col. Grey, which was the reason I had called alone.

The direct loss from this visitation of the army-worm, or rather from the fact of the South not being able to make a crop this year (there was really no crop to destroy—the army-worm simply exposed the situation), was immense, but compared with the indirect loss, it was insignificant—

though if the direct loss had not come, the indirect loss would not have been great.

The indirect loss was in the failure of the planters to meet their engagements with their laborers, and the demoralization resulting therefrom. The negroes were badly enough demoralized when they were hired in the spring, but turned out, as they were now all over the South, to starve, in how much worse a condition they would be when the time came to gather them up for the purpose of making a new crop.

All hope of a crop this year being now dispelled, each factor put his foot down in most cases, and refused further advances. As a result, plantations were abandoned, and the levees and railroads were lined with negro families dismissed from service, because their employers could no longer furnish food for them. The negroes believed their masters possessed untold wealth, and they were perfectly incapable of understanding that they were dismissed from sheer necessity. In many instances the same hunger which awaited the negroes awaited their white employers. If the latter were to be blamed, because of a determination early in the season not to do fairly with the negroes—not from lack of ability, but because of their non-acceptance of the situation—they were now equally to be pitied, the crop failure having rendered the carrying out of their contracts impossible.

Then, there was the demoralization of the planters. Most of them had staked all their ready money on the crop, while very many had exhausted their credit, frequently mortgaging their plantations in doing so. Almost a total crop failure was to be the result. There was nothing for the laborer, and there would be but little for the planter, when the crop was all gathered, which little would have to go to the factors on account of advances.

Many of the new-comers contemplated an early abandonment of the field, and a return to the North. But with

the Southeren planters it was different. They had no other home, no other occupation. There was nothing to do but to pick their flints and try again. All that could be said against them now was that they would have been in better condition if they had paid less attention to the President's policy, honestly accepting the situation, and if their habits of life had been different. But more than all was their desperate situation due to the condition of the soil, and to their own and the negroes' ignorance; so that, while they were at fault, they were still more the victims of misfortune, and as such the Southern people were now truly an object of pity.

If Providence had smiled on this region in 1866, by giving it a reasonable crop, sectional politics, injustice to the negro and the new-comer, bitterness of heart, and hatred of the government would all have disappeared. In the absence of a good crop, the result was that these were all intensified.

It is natural for mankind to seek excuses for their misfortunes, other than their natural causes. This is particularly true of a people like those of the South, with their passions inflamed, and governed, not so much by reason, as by impulse.

If the reader will understand that this crop failure, following upon the losses incident to the war, thoroughly and completely prostrated the South, he will be able to appreciate its pitiful situation at this time.

What a spectacle it was! Looking out upon the worm-eaten fields, at the skeleton cotton-stalks—sickly, spindling, and small even before the last visitation which now had stripped them of all except the few mature bolls, the only fruit left; the choked-up ditches; the huge plantations, overgrown with briers, cotton-wood, willows, and in many places bearing the marks of overflow from the waters of the Mississippi, through the numerous ugly gaps in the levees; at the absence of forage, meat, and meal; at

the books of the cotton-factors, and the country merchants, who had supplied the plantations, disclosing, as they did, monstrous indebtedness, with no crops in the field to cancel the same; at the fact that there was absolutely nothing left but the land, buildings, mules, and implements, and these in most cases heavily mortgaged; and then, above and over all, at the recently enfranchised negro, with the problem yet unsolved, as to whether he could be made an efficient free laborer;—if all this could have been understood, some idea of the utter and complete prostration throughout the South might have been gained, and the country would have had more patience with this terribly smitten section than it has had.

There was but one source of relief—through the same soil and labor which had now so grievously disappointed all. Many said, with pale faces, "We have utterly failed to make cotton; is there no other crop which these lands will produce?" Many talked of broom-corn, castor-beans, etc., but cotton was the idol of the South, and the people were not yet ready to break it into pieces.

The worst feature in the whole case was the utter want of appreciation on the part of the negroes, that they had made a crop failure; that the only source of revenue to the planter was his crop, and, this having failed, in the nature of things there must be great distress; and so, when pay and rations failed to come with perfect promptness they attributed it to an intention on the part of the planter to defraud them. They would not consider for an instant that it was from lack of funds.

"Look at de crop in de fiel'," would be their answer, "our old masters have got heaps and heaps of money, and we knows it," and so on.

Never was the utter darkness of intellect of the recently enfranchised negro more apparent than now. Here were the smitten fields, all but barren of any crop, due in part to their defective labor; the money and credit of the planter gone,

with nothing to show for it; and yet they did not seem to have the faintest idea of the general and fearful wreck. If they were not fed and paid, it was because their employer did not want to do it—this was their conclusion; and so the breach between them was widening.

The planter made mistakes, and grave ones, but in the midst of a conflagration how many feather-beds are tenderly carried down stairs, while the looking-glasses are rudely thrown from the window! It was a spectacle of general destruction, not less frightful than where this has happened, and the sufferers were scarcely more accountable for what they did.

The trouble with the negro was utter inability to realize the state of affairs, to understand he had made no crop, and that the season was as near as possible a total failure.

Those of us who had bought land were chained to the situation. In our own case, to abandon the country was to lose our first payment of $27,500, and so the thing was not to be thought of for an instant, though there was the second payment of equal amount with current expenses to be met—how, was yet in the future.

We felt that we had learned something about planting cotton, though at a terrible cost, and unless we continued on, utilizing the knowledge acquired by planting another crop, our year of struggle would be thrown away.

"No, we will never do this," I said to myself all alone in our cabin. "The production of cotton is a legitimate enterprise; this land produced it before the war, and it will do it again. With equally good mules and the same land, if a crop is not made, it will be due to one of two causes—the labor bestowed, or Providence, and has not the Almighty pledged us seed time and harvest? We will guard against the first by making such a contract as will force the loss resulting from a failure, unless from Providential causes such as storms or army-worms, upon the laborers; but before we can conscientiously do this we must restore

the ditches on Hebron. Our cultivation this year will, in a manner, redeem the land from its weed-ridden state, and with the ditches opened for drainage, we shall have done our part. Our contract with our laborers runs until the first of January. The crop we shall have to pick will not require near all of that time. Having agreed to, we will keep them at work, and for the time they are not picking they must ditch. Next year our place will be in a condition to make a crop, and we will hold our laborers to it. We have lost our money here, and right here we will stay until we find it."

"Did you speak?" George called out.

"No, not to you," I said, a little confused at being caught thinking aloud.

That night I heard George telling Mary, "De boss done git so lonesome dat he talks to hisself."

Having taken my resolution I proceeded to make it known to our hands, and they acquiesced at once, declaring they were all born ditchers.

It was necessary to order shovels, which I did at once, and in the meantime, until they came, or the cotton opened sufficient to commence picking, I put our force to cutting out the growth in the ditches and getting them ready for the shovels.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

OUR LOG-CABIN.

THE destruction of the crop by the army-worm left nothing to fear from frost, which we had hitherto dreaded and had hoped would postpone its coming until late in the season, so as to give our cotton the longest possible time to

fruit. On the contrary, I now ardently desired its coming as the signal for the commencement of the healthy season, when we should again breathe a wholesome atmosphere, and my family could return to Hebron with perfect safety, so far as health was concerned. Scarcely, however, had this latter thought warmed and quickened my blood than it was chilled again, when I remembered that the only place I had for them was our room in the overseer's cabin. And, looking out upon our worm-eaten and weed-ridden fields, I saw the sad but unmistakable evidence that there was no crop in sight to justify the expenditure of even a penny in the building of a new house.

In the early days of our enterprise it had never entered our heads that we should not have each a nice little home on the plantation for our families in the fall. We had said good-bye to our dear ones at the village landing, with the certain belief that when we welcomed them again it would be at the Hebron landing, and to that new home.

During my rides over the plantation with Dobson, we had talked over our locations and decided upon them; but now, alas! so far as our cotton crop could help us, our castles in the air could not possibly take substantial shape and foundation, and it looked as if, for this year at least, they were not to be any thing more than pleasant dreams.

If at the time we purchased Hebron we had been asked how much we should expect to spend for our plantation homes, we would unhesitatingly have said, "Not less than five thousand dollars each." That was the day of promise. The day of performance was now at hand. The journey from daylight to darkness was in the interval. How gladly now we would have taken a naught off the spring estimate for our houses. Yes, how happy we should be if we could see in our smitten fields the prospect of a crop sufficient to make our second payment and meet our current expenses.

As I looked our situation squarely in the face, not a ray of sunshine lightened it; and yet we must have a home, if

ever so humble. But whence was the money to come to pay for it?

But for my partner we might manage to get along in the overseer's cabin for another year, although the discomforts would be great. Not that I feared Mrs. Harding would object to it; I knew her well enough to feel certain that she would gladly accept any thing which would secure us a shelter from rain and storm and reunite our family. And then in my misery I thought we should be very happy if only we could be assured of this wretched place. The more I considered it, however, the more I felt certain that even this boon would be denied us. Naturally, Dobson would recover from the shock of our disappointments sufficiently to wish to return, and with him, of course, the healthy season being at hand, would come his wife. I knew that neither of us would feel it right for himself to occupy our room in the overseer's cabin with his family to the exclusion of the other. Besides, we needed every inch of this cabin for the general plantation business, and we could not afford to allow either or both of the partners to devote it to personal uses. And yet there seemed no other way to secure a roof for us.

Once, in my great desperation, I contemplated writing Dobson, to ask how it would do to cut our room in the cabin in two, with a partition, his family taking half and mine half, or an 8 x 9 apartment each. As I revolved this plan, I found myself thinking what a bright spot this 8 x 9 room would be. Talking to myself, as I had learned to do in my solitude, there fell upon my ear the exclamation, in my squeaky voice:

"Would n't it be cozy?"

Then I remembered the Dobsons' brown-stone front and the Harding residence, in their splendid neighborhood, which our wives would have to leave for such a place. At which my voice was again heard soliloquizing: "Such a step would be just grounds for a divorce." But what bet-

ter could be done was the anxious question. Look whichever way I might, this seemed the only alternative. And then all the bile engendered in my system would become aroused at the thought that this was the only way open.

One day, however, while I was still fretting over the matter, I chanced to ride to the upper end of the plantation, out in front of the levee, where there was a young cotton-wood thicket. The leaves of these long, lithe, rapid-growing trees glistened in the sunlight. The fact is, I used frequently to ride up into this grove—that it was going northward, and took me a mile nearer my family, was enough to make it a favorite ride. How often I sat on my horse here, as I did upon that memorable night, when the "Dan Able," with its precious load, passed out of my sight, around the bend above, and looked longingly up the river. Then, if perchance a northward-bound boat should steam by, would again come the eager desire to hail her for passage, and be forever done with this hapless experience.

Oh! the lonely feeling of the pioneer, as his thoughts go back to the home of civilization from his hard life in the wilderness! Who can realize it, except one who has drunk of the same cup? Such was my thought upon this particular morning.

"Yes, this is in every respect a pioneer experience," my voice squeaked out. "Well, pioneers live in log-cabins," it added. "If you are a pioneer, and want a home for your family, go build them a log-cabin." Then a breeze swayed the cotton-wood saplings, and they bowed to me, as if to say: "Here we are; cut us down and hew us—here are the logs for your cabin." It was all clear to me. A log-cabin it should be.

Not less than a home for my family did I need a thoroughly distracting occupation. Living in the midst of the scene of our terrible disappointment, without a single congenial companion—my system filled with malaria, the characteristic feature of which is melancholy, be the suf-

ferer's surroundings ever so bright (and mine were ever so dark), which intensified the feeling; with our financial necessities looming up in our pathway, to be in some way other than by our crop satisfied—all these had their natural effect to fill me with sensations of desperate gloom. The only hope was to get out of this rut. No sooner had I decided upon building a log-cabin than I seemed to be lifted into a new atmosphere.

"Not as Solomon built the temple will I build our log-cabin," I said to myself, as my spur struck the side of my horse, sending him homeward on a keen gallop, "but just as pioneers build their cabins will I build ours. Their hands fell the trees, hew the logs, haul them, put them in place, chink them with mud and sticks, rive out puncheons for floors, etc. All this I, John Harding, will do, and when I welcome my family to their plantation home, I will be able to tell them that my own hands wrought it, and there will be blisters and calloused skin in their hollows as proof."

I never stopped to think that this was not the Southern home of my dreams. My absorbing thought was that I had hit upon a plan for the accomplishment of my present desire, a home for my family.

The consummation of the plan was the occupation which I so much needed.

The architect's task was the work of an evening. Before bed-time I had our cabin on paper. It was a labor of love, and the time occupied did not seem an hour. But George came in to say it was "pow'ful late, done pas' midnight."

"My! can it be that late?" I answered. "It has been a very short evening." Then I showed George my drawing, telling him what I proposed.

"De Lo'd, sir! dat's easier said 'n done—but I knows you's got de courage to put it through. Hit 'll be pow'ful nice to hab de missus and de chil'en here agin, even ef dey

hab to lib in a log-cabin. But dat's a pow'ful fine log-cabin, in dat pictur'. Dat's nice 'nuff house for anybody," George added, continuing to eye the draft with admiration.

"My grandfather was a pioneer settler in Ohio," I said to George; "and, when a small boy, I used to live with him, and that is where I learned what little I know of farming. I remember his log-cabin so well. This is modeled after it. One thing about it I remember particularly well. I used to go to bed on cold winter nights, to wake up in the morning and find streaks of snow scattered over the bed-cover and along the floor, which had sifted through the rude roof and chinks in the logs. How my breath would steam out through the cold! Oh, George, how nice it would be to have a taste of that experience down here now! How it would purify the atmosphere, and bring health again to this sickly country: It was not very pleasant to have to jump out of bed, in my bare feet, on the snow-sprinkled floor, and to have snow from the comforter sifted on the exposed parts of my body, but it was wholesome, and, as I now feel, I would jump into a snow-bank with less clothes on than when, in my grandfather's cabin, I jumped, out of my warm feather-bed nest, upon the cold, snow-streaked floor."

By this time, George was pulling his coat-collar up about his ears, and he exclaimed:

"Dat sort o' talk puts me all in a shiver o' cold."

"Well, good-night, George; if you 're cold, go to bed and warm up. I will do the same, although I 'm not shivering with cold."

Ever since the destruction of our crop by the army-worm, my sleep at night had been broken by gloomy thoughts concerning our ruined prospects, and in the vain effort to devise some way out of them. To-night, as my head pressed the pillow, it was full of my log-cabin scheme, and my brain was so excited that I spent the night building it in fancy. I also arranged the furniture in it, and

welcomed my family to its occupancy. In the darkness of the night I fancied I could see the fire crackling upon the hearth, with the Harding family seated around it. It was only when day came, that these delightful illusions were dispelled by the thought that many would be the hard blows before the vision of my dreams could become a charming reality.

The following day, three axes swung busily in the cotton-wood thicket, and by night a number of the trees, which in the morning had reared their young heads proudly heavenward, lay prone upon the ground. My own ax was the busiest one of the three, and as I plied my happy task, I made an estimate that each blow brought my family a foot nearer to me. Not a moment was there now for brooding or gloomy thoughts, while wholesome hunger and sleep were the natural results of this heavy, manual labor.

As day followed day, our cabin took shape and form under the sturdy blows which willing hands struck for it. It was a proud moment for me to find, as I did at the end of the fifth day, our logs all chopped, hewed, and notched. Then came the hauling of them, and the getting of blocks for the foundation.

The location selected by me was on the spot where we had commenced our cotton-planting in the spring. It was one of the spots where the cotton had grown luxuriantly. It was necessary to clear a space for our cabin, and I pulled up the cotton-stalks regretfully, feeling that, with our slender show for cotton, we could not afford to destroy a single boll.

I carefully laid the stalks at one side, where we could pick out the cotton as the sun cracked open the bolls. It was a proud moment when, with a tape-line, I laid off the ground, and drove the pegs for the corners. The fresh cotton-ridges in our prospective yard made the hauling of our material rough enough; but, recollecting the object to be accomplished, I relished it keenly, bearing a large share

in the task of helping to lift each log on and off the wagon, and frequently riding the lead mule, in true teamster style.

Knowing that General Dobson would also need a house, I had not proceeded far in the erection of our own before I decided to detail Billy, with a couple of extra hands, to build a duplicate on the spot he had selected. Thus the two cabins were under way at the same time—ours being a little in the lead. These preparations must not, however, interfere with our farm duties, so there was the general superintendence of these added to my task, all of which filled up my time to its utmost,

I could now show the horny hand of toil, and my bronzed features told their story of exposure, while my squeaking voice yet gave evidence that I was a victim to the influences of the climate.

This strain upon me was just what I needed, however, to keep me out of the "slough of despond." The very moment I stopped to think there would come up the picture of our year of failure, and, passing from that to the future the anxious inquiry would arise, "How are we to get through the next year?"

Sunday was a day greatly to be dreaded. There were no religious exercises, except such as those already described, which the negroes engaged in, and the very sight of which, presenting such a sad spectacle of benighted ignorance, made one feel gloomy. Outside of this attempt at worship, and the village spire, with its vacant temple below, there was nothing to indicate any Christian observance of the Sabbath here. On the contrary, the occasional glimpses I had of whisky-drinking, card-playing, and general debauchery at the village landing, on this day, indicated that the customs of this section had especially set it apart for such sinful purposes.

As for reading matter, I had long since exhausted our supply, going over it time and again, even down to the patent-medicine almanac. We used to get, by the Saturday

evening packets, New Orleans and Vicksburg newspapers, but so full of bitterness were they against the North that it was only an aggrevation to read them. If we were to judge from these papers, the great mass of people in the North, led by President Johnson, were heartily sorry for what had happened to the South, during the war, and they were about to give them back all they had lost. The few in the North who did not feel in that way, were, according to these papers, so many cut-throats, thieves, and villains.

This fearful Sunday ordeal always left me demoralized. Weary with our labors of the week, I slept as much of it away as possible, managing generally to get rid of two or three hours in this way; but the effect was nearly all lost by the wakeful Sunday night which followed. Thus, in spite of all my efforts to the contrary, Monday morning would find me fretted at our situation, as the result of my Sunday's brooding.

Continued action, not a moment for thought, was the medicine I required, and Sunday gave me the very opposite, so that as often as it came I sickened under its influence, and scarcely would I recover from one paroxysm before the next came. Oh, how ardently I longed for the Sunday influences I had parted with in the North. If it should ever be my fate to resume them, how I would prize them! No frontiersman was ever more completely excluded from all church privileges than I was here. I used frequently to question, whether it were not better to work right along, forgetting Sunday, than to drone and fret around one day in seven as I did.

There was another experience which was particularly exasperating. I seldom now visited the village landing, or came in contact with Southern people; but when I did, there was in the manner of most of them, more than ever, an intimation that we were at best simply tolerated, while, with a few, it was unmistakable repulsion and scorn.

Be it remembered, I am now speaking of the period prior

to reconstruction, when the State and county governments were entirely in the hands of the old citizens. We had never given utterance to a political opinion, but had simply come into the country, purchased a farm and gone to work. If immigration is ever a blessing our immigration was, and yet here we were simply tolerated, not unfrequently frowned at by the people in whose midst we were located. It is said that you can take an intelligent child, and by constantly treating him as having no sense, in time make an idiot of him. In the same way, you can continue to charge an honest man with dishonesty until he comes to half-believe it himself. Similar influences were at work upon me. We had made our location with the best intentions, and with the sincere feeling that our coming was a gain to the locality. Indeed, I knew this to be so by the proof of statistics. The result of our reception and treatment was to cause me to distrust myself. Thus, in passing through the village one day, I distinctly heard one of the intolerant loafers, who had frowned in my face as I brushed by him, say to another of his class:

"Did you notice what an ugly eye that Yankee has in his head?"

I passed out of hearing before the reply was given, and tried to forget it; but when I reached home, one of the first things I did was to peer into a mirror, and study my eye, to see if I could detect any thing ugly in its expression, exasperated at myself to think that the remark had impressed me so deeply as to cause such an inquiry on my part.

This offensive war of sentiment, falling upon us as silently and as unwholesomely as an epedemic settles upon a land, pervaded my system, and frequently it found me defending myself, and again inquiring whether there was not something in my character to justify the Southern people in their mistreatment of and intolerance toward me. Then I would try to recall the esteem in which I had always

been held at our late home, which would tone me up again. But, being thus put on the defense, at the next instant the feeling would return.

I mention this because, while building our log-cabin, I had signal evidence of the feeling toward me. The autumn elections were at hand in the North, and the Southern people had been confidently looking forward for them to demonstrate the great reaction in their favor, when, as one after another State returned heavy majorities against them, they became savage. I visited the village to get some nails for our cabin, just after some particularly overwhelming opposition returns had reached them. I was met nowhere outside of the village merchant's store with any thing but frowns, and savage utterances which would not be proper to repeat here, but which convinced me that there was a strong disposition to wreak their vengeance for the victories in the North upon me.

"Better hurry home," whispered the village merchant to me, as he wrapped up the nails. "The boys are feeling ugly over the election returns, and there is no telling what they might do if they should get sight of a Northern man."

I heeded the warning, hurrying back to the plantation; but with such feelings! Fleeing from personal danger—for what? Not because I had excited any body by boasting at the village of recent victories in the North. I had not even mentioned them. They were not even in my thoughts. I had never even declared my politics. No, my offense was that I had recently immigrated from a section which, at its latest election, was casting a majority of votes against their party, and this was sufficient ground for the murder of one of our class, if they should chance to encounter him.

I gave my navy-tobacco vigorous puffs that evening, in my lonely room, as I recalled the state of affairs at the village landing, and then I pinched myself to see if I were

really John Harding, and, looking into the glass, I read the sad truth, that it was only his wreck.

Again and again would I come back to the question, "What have I done that I should be thus treated? As a matter of fact, am I an objectionable character, to be simply tolerated, frowned upon, or murdered, if I don't hurry away from the village landing when I go there to make a purchase, if I chance to find the people in a passion, because an election in another section has gone against their wishes? What a life it is to be sure. If I am spoken pleasantly to at all, it is by stealth—and then to hear that men have been ostracized, yes, murdered, because they extend to us the courtesy of some sort of a welcome!" Always upon such occasions would come up the recollection of Chapman's tragic fate for associating with us.

CHAPTER LXX.

THE COMMENCEMENT OF COTTON-PICKING.

The full-grown cotton-boll, just before it is ready to open and expose the fleecy staple ripe for the picker's dexterous fingers, bears a strong resemblance to the hickory-nut in the hull, except that it is about the size of the walnut, and elongated like the butter-nut. As the cotton ripens in the boll, the latter loses its green and assumes a russet hue. The seams of the pod become more and more distinct as maturity approaches, while the rind is glossy and has the appearance of being stretched to its utmost by the rapidly swelling fruit within. Then comes the bursting of the boll.

There are four or five pods to each boll;—first, are seen

the tiniest lines of pure white, increasing for several days, until the pods are pressed back by the swelling cotton, as the breezes open out their folds; finally hanging down in graceful waves, ready for the picker's hands.

First it is the advanced bolls, the pioneers, which open out their singular and beautiful fruit, here and there, one or more on a stalk—this, be it remembered, while the plant is still blossoming. Thus, as before stated, all stages, from the blossom to the ripe cotton, are seen upon the same stalk—that is, such is the case when the army-worm does not come, as it did this year, and kill the stalk.

The first picking is called "trashing;" that is, the hands go over the field and pick the cotton from the few open bolls, realizing twenty pounds and upwards a day, whereas, if there were plenty of cotton open, they would gather two hundred pounds. This first picking—the hands having to search for the open cotton, thus disturbing the stalks—causes the ripe bolls to open rapidly, so that a field which has been "trashed" over will in a few days be again ready for the pickers, with plenty of cotton for full work.

This is true with reference to a healthy growth of cotton. We had only a few acres of such. This I looked upon with pride, whenever I could forget for a moment that the rest of the plantation was its opposite, and I found myself trying to believe that we had a good many acres of fair cotton; but alas! my better judgment told me that when I saw good cotton on Hebron, I had to seek for it. In one view it was greatly to the advantage of my feelings—though it held me in suspense, which is always unpleasant—that I had never seen an old-time crop of cotton; so I could make no comparison between it and the Hebron crop, and thus arrive at an intelligent conclusion as to our prospects. Be a crop good or otherwise, however, I knew that the harvest must always be a hopeful period. It is something to see the product coming in, even if you know the yield may be small. Such was my sensation, when one morn-

ing in the early part of September, I started out our force for the picking season. The wagons carried out the big baskets for holding the cotton as it was emptied from the picking-sacks. Behind them, with their picking-sacks ready to commence work, followed our force.

"I's longed for dis day," said Milly to Martha, as they trudged along, side by side."

"Go 'long, now Milly. Sis Frances kin pick all roun' you, an' at de same time dance a hoe-down on de turnin' row afo' you gits in wid your row."

"Bragg 's a good dog; hole-fast 's anudder," grunted out Uncle Wash, at this attack on his Milly.

"Does you see dose fingers da?" flashed out Milly, holding up her hands. "De second pa'r was nebber born dat could beat 'em pickin' cotton.

"Does you call dis pickin' cotton? I calls it trashin'. Wait till de cotton gits open, an' I 'm wid you from de risin' till de settin' ob de sun. I's bo'n 'twixt de cotton rows, chile, an 'pickin 's my fote," said Rube to Milly, as he swung along with his Indian gait.

Just then we were passing by a field of our small cotton.

"You niggars 'll git mighty lame backs afore we gits through dis crap, pickin' in dis small cotton, an' havin' to stoop over so," remarked Richard.

"Dat 's so," a number of them replied.

"Et 'ill be huntin' for cotton here," said Wes, the little French negro.

I felt like telling him that was all he knew about it, if he thought there was not much cotton in that field, but then I reflected that it was likely to turn out as he said, and I had best keep still. So little fretted me now, and Wes's insinuation had done it. I was especially sensitive on this point.

"Dat 's all you knows about a crap, nigger," replied Wash, indignantly; "der 's heaps o' cotton on dis place, an' you 'll find it out so afore de pickin' season 's ober."

Wash's assurance restored my temper, although the complacency I felt at his belief was rather the result of my heart's wish than of conviction.

"Bless you, Uncle Wash," I exclaimed, "you are always giving me comfort."

"Nebber mind, Unk Wash," replied Wes, "time 'll tell who 's right."

"Yes, time will tell, an' what' s mo,' it 'll be Uncle Wash, sho' ; I knows a crap when I sees it, I does."

We had now reached the field we were to begin on.

"Scatter de baskets 'long de turnin' row," called out Uncle Wash to the drivers.

"To be sho'," they replied, proceeding to do it.

"Turn in dar, two on a row," said Uncle Wash to the pickers.

Milly sprang to the task, and the first lock was picked by her.

Martha saw it, and was chagrined that her favorite picker, Frances, had not taken the honor, but made the best of it, exclaiming:

"La, Sis Milly, dat do 'nt significate ; do n't de Bible say de fust shall be last?"

"Dat do n't 'fer to cotton-pickin', an' you knows it, Sis Martha," retorted Milly, wonderfully in earnest in her determination to get the most cotton for the evening's weighing.

Old Clara was on hand with her picking-sack.

She called out: "Sis Martha, you 're a sinner, an' sinners has no right to be quotin' from de Bible. Sis Milly 'longs to the Lord's 'n'inted ; she 's 'ligious, an' knows what de Bible means."

Martha retorted: "I ain't studyin' 'bout 'ligion—time 'nuff fo' dat ; I wants my fun fust—dey ain't any fun in 'ligion. I believes in de fiddle an' dancin', I does."

There was a general groan among the church people, particularly Clara, at this sacrilegious talk of Martha.

"You'se de debil's own chile, plum pintedly!" Clara exclaimed, at which there were several responses: "Yes, Massa;" "Yes, Jesus;" "Do you hea' me?" and then Uncle Wash yelled out: "Less 'ligion and more cotton-pickin' in dat field; do you hea' *me!*" But the conversation had struck a religious vein, and was not to be easily quieted. After a moment of silence, it broke out again in the shape of a hymn, which Clara started up, or rather the line of one:

"Yes, Jesus, hea' me,"

which was taken up by the "brothers" and "sisters," and repeated time and again, until one of the "sinner negroes," with a very rich voice, opened out with:

"Way down upon de Swanee ribber."

This was understood to be a signal for his class, and most of them joined in, soon effectually quieting the religious singers.

"Water me!" some one cried.

"Hea' dat nigger!" exclaimed Wash, in disgust. "Dis ain't de hoein' season, an' dar ain't no heat in de a'r, fo' you to be cry'in' water. You jes' wait till you git back to de turnin'-row, whar de wagon is, fo' water. No mo' water-toters in dis field dis year;—water-toters, chiluns, old folks an' nursin' 'omen, all got to turn in an' pick, ef dis crap is to be saved. You niggers dar, what's been talkin' all de year 'bout bein' big cotton-pickers, better stop your talkin' an' go to pickin', caze it's de scales at de wagon dat 'll tell who's de big pickers. Stir up dar, Milly—don't you see how Sis Frances is jes' reachin' out fo' cotton?" added Uncle Wash.

Milly looked up with an injured air, as much as to say, "Uncle Wash, you need not ever push me to work," which was quite true, and none knew it better than he; but the fact was, Wash was ambitious that his Milly should be the

prize-picker—and he saw by Frances' mood that it would crowd her to become so.

"I declar'," said Clara, "It 'pears like I'd hab to laarn to pick cotton agin. We black folks hab n't had any ob it to do sence 'fore de 'bellion sot in, an' it goes mighty awk'ard now—my fingers ain't nothin' like as suple as dey used to be."

"'Fore de wa' was five years ago, Clarry—fingers git pow'ful stiff restin' all dat time," said Reub.

"Dat 'pends on what you calls restin'," said Clara; "dese hans hab done some work in dat time."

"What I means by work is cotton-pickin'," replied Reub.

"Dat's what darkies' fingers was made fo', and less'n dey hab it to do ebery year, dey's restin'—jes' what we's all been doin'."

"Alex and John," said an old negro to his sons, one about ten and the other about sixteen, who were picking near him, "when I war your age, de obserseer used to whip me on de turnin'-row at night ef I did n't hab two hundred pounds ob clean cotton in my baskets. Dey ain't any oberseer now, since we's got our freedom, to whip us; but I's gwine to see dat you larn to pick jes' as I was larnt, an' ef de cotton ain't in your basket when weighin' time comes, your dad's gwine to know de reason why."

"Yes, dad, we'll do de bes' we kin," drawled one of the boys in reply.

"De bes' you kin is as well as de nex' one," answered the father. "Ef you git dat, you's all right—ef not, look out fo' your hides."

This admonition had the immediate effect on Alex and John to hurry them up. And then, doubtless instigated by the threat of the old man to punish his sons, some one started the song commencing:

"Oh! niggers, does you know you's free now?" etc.

Alex was old enough to have a sweetheart among the negro girls, who mischievously called out, looking over to him with her great black eyes:

"Alex's dad's gwine to switch him ef he don't hab's much cotton in his basket to-night as de res';—better hurry up dar, Alex, ef you don't want to get switched,"—this with a chuckling laugh, showing a dazzlingly white set of teeth.

Alex answered good-naturedly:

"I'll be dar to see you, Minty, when de weighin' time comes."

I could see at a glance this morning that the work of cotton-picking was one which absolutely prevented shirking. The cotton in the basket, when weighed, as it was to be nightly, would tell the story. This knowledge was refreshing. If we only had what we expected when we embarked in our enterprise, a fair crop, how happy I should now have felt. How rapidly the picking season, running into January as it does, and frequently later when a good crop is made, would have glided away.

The glorious days of autumn were at hand, when, except at midday, the heat was not at all uncomfortable; when the forests were clothing themselves in russet and gold; when insect life, hitherto so troublesome, had mostly disappeared; when the nights were delightfully cool, inviting to uninterrupted sleep—and if I could have felt that for months to come cotton was to flow from our fields in a steady stream, I repeat, how happy should I have been! Still, as it was, I must confess that upon this particular day I was not the most unhappy man in the world.

There was in me one per cent. of belief and ninety-nine per cent. of hope, that after all we had a considerable crop to gather. Then the happy feeling of the harvest time was upon me. There, out in the field, were our busy pickers, and soon, their sacks becoming heavy with the weight of cotton in them, one after another commenced

coming out to the turning-row, where the baskets were, with their gaping, hungry mouths ready to receive the first tribute of the harvester. Milly had picked the first lock, but Frances was the first to discharge her load, Milly coming half a minute later. Their baskets were near together, and, after the contents of their sacks were emptied into them, there was a subject for a painter in the scene—each eyeing the other's basket with the same thought expressed in their countenances: "I wonder which basket will win!"

Uncle Wash was there too, and not a little anxiously he put his hand first into one basket and then into the other, bearing down each time as if seeking to determine which contained the most. Reub came up just then, and taking in the scene, said:

"Go way dere, Uncle Wash. I 'll tromp de baskets, an' kin tell you which has de mos' in it, to a lock."

Whereupon, with his left foot in the center, and his right as a tramper, Reub proceeded to circle around on top of the cotton in each basket, looking very wise meanwhile.

Seeing there was likely to be a controversy, which would take time from picking, I said:

"The scales will tell the story to-night. Reub's opinion will not settle any thing. Go back to work."

They all answered in a chorus, "Dat 's so," and returned to picking.

As I walked along and looked into the baskets filling up with the staple, as white as the untrodden snow, I was deeply impressed with its great beauty. And then I thought of the miner, who, after months of hard and unrequited toil, finally seizes the first nugget of gold, and felt that I could appreciate his feelings through my own at the present moment.

There was our treasure, after seven months of toil and rough experience, at last in sight! And then at the thought, I thrust my hands into the cotton, lifting up the

white locks, which looked like giant snow-flakes, and letting them fall back into their fleecy beds.

Not only did I do this,—I found myself pressing a handful to my breast; but I recollected myself—the excitement over the first sight of the fruit of our long toil was carrying me too far.

I did foolish and childish things like this, however, all day long, constantly delighting to handle the fresh staple. It was like the father's sensation over his first-born babe, when his eye for the first time rests upon it.

When the negroes would get into the basket with their big feet and dirty shoes to trample down the lovely, white, fleecy stuff, I felt like crying out: "Get out of there, you 're hurting it; you 're soiling it; it is cruel to crush it so!" And when at last night came and the scales told of Milly's discomforture and Frances' triumph, and when John and Alex were informed by their father that he would let them off this time, but to-morrow night, if they did not have the cotton, he would know the reason why; and when I saw the day's work emptied from the baskets into the wagons—so many white billows to be beaten under the feet of the trampers, as the wind whips down the white-crested waves into solid sheets of foam:—I was at once angry at the rough treatment my idol was receiving and enthused by its beauty.

And when at last, our wagons full to overflowing, I started off behind them for the gin-house, I seemed to be following snow-banks on wheels; and so busy was my imagination, and so excited my brain, I fancied there came back to me from them a breath of chill, which fancy was not dispelled until at a turn in the road I buried my hand in one of the great white piles to find the warmth of wool.

The crowd of tired negroes followed along behind, their sacks over their shoulders, discussing the events of the day.

Martha was jubilant over her "favor*ite's*" (as she called her) "success."

"Sis Milly, what 'd I tell you 'bout Sis Frances?"

"Dat 's all right, Sis Martha; dey 's mo' days 'n one, I rec'ons. I 'll be in de fiel' to-morrow, God willin', to see Sis Frances," replied Milly, with an air which said plainly, "I can beat her, certain."

"Sis Frances 'll be dere sho," answered Martha.

"Yes, you can 'pend on dat," said Frances, not a little proudly over her day's success.

"Golly, you niggars ort to know 'nuff 'bout cotton-pickin' to know dat one day don't 'cide nuffin'," said Reub.

"Ef it did, you 'd be no whar," sputtered out Wes, the French negro. Reub's first day's record as a cotton-picker was one of the lowest.

'Go 'long, Wes; I was jes' gittin' my hand in to-day—come an' see me arter I git started."

"Dar must ha' been some mo' gittin' their hands in to-day," said Richard, sarcastically, "by de weights."

"Dat 's so," answered Uncle Wash. "Ef some of you niggars is done your best to-day, dar 's been mighty tall braggin' on dis plantation dis year."

"Wait 'til we git our fingers an' our backs suple," said one of the hitherto biggest boasters, but whose day's record was even below Reub's.

"Yes, dat 's so," responded several of the equally guilty ones.

"Did you 'sarve Mr. Harding, to-day," I heard one negro ask another in a low tone. "He 's bin nigh 'side hisself at de fust sight o' de cotton. 'Pears like he 's fear'd we 'd hurt it han'lin' it."

"Yes, he tole me to clean off my boots 'fore I got into de wagon to tramp de cotton," was the reply.

"I tole him de cotton would clean 'em. He said dat was jes' what he did n't want; he din n't want to have it s'iled; dat he did n't want a pin's p'int of dirt on it; dat

cotton 's like our white pocket-handkercher of a Sunday: how would we like to wipe our muddy boots on hit?"

There was a little subdued mirth over this idea, when some one said:

"De bos 'll git ober dat 'fore we 's been pickin' many days; cotton aint s' easy s'iled as all dat comes to."

"Cotton s'iled," was the answer, spoken disdainfully. "Et 'll take rain an' mud 'tel you 'd think it was ruinated, and den come out o' de gin stan' as white as Liss' teeth thar.'

"Go way dar, niggar; you better not be cas'in' sheep's-eyes at my teef; my teef 'longs to me."

"Who 's cas'in' sheep's-eyes at your teef, gal? You 's got so much mouf, if you 's any whar roun' de fust t'ing to see is your teef."

The laugh was on Liss, and being boisterously indulged in, threw her into a pout. And then the music in the negro cropped out, as there fell upon the night air:

"Can't stay in de wilderness," etc.

The song proceeding, one after another joined in, until the air fairly rang with the music of their rich voices.

"Why do n't you jine in de singin', Liss?" asked good old Clara, evidently wishing to mollify her.

"I aint stud'in' 'bout singin," growled Liss.

CHAPTER LXXI.

RETURN OF MRS. HARDING AND THE CHILDREN.

A FEW days before our cabin was completed, while I was hewing down a wooden wedge, which I held in my left hand, the hatchet made a mistake, and cut out quite a large piece of the ball of the hand, below the thumb. This would put a stop to my further carpentering, but there was little more to do to make our home complete.

I had, before coming South, taken out a policy in an accident insurance company, my weekly dues from which, in case of an injury, were fifty dollars, so that the wound, in view of our short crop, was not an unmixed evil. My disability would probably last a couple of weeks, and though one hundred dollars was but little in the light of the Dobson statement, it was yet a considerable sum in the light of its results.

It was now the 5th of November; our first frost had come the 15th of October, and there had been several since, so that the atmosphere was now thoroughly wholesome. I had, some time before, written to Mrs. Harding that I would be ready to receive her any time after the 10th of November.

In my enervated condition there was a good deal of the child about me. I found myself looking longingly up the river before the time for her arrival had come, and grew more petulant each day. Then my accident rendered me useless for any thing but riding around a little among the cotton-pickers with my hand in a sling. My blood was thin, and in consequence the wound healed slowly. It was also quite painful, breaking into my sleep at night. The days seemed weeks, and the nights interminable.

The 10th of November, however, at last arrived. The sun went down, and the stars appeared, but no Mrs. Harding, and then I did indeed feel anxious. But I was to have four more days of this anxiety, only constantly increasing, before my great suspense was removed.

For a week previous I had been occupying what, compared with our lodging in the overseer's cabin, I regarded as spacious apartments, in our new house. True, the gum flooring rattled under my feet, and showed a decided inclination to warp up toward the roof, and patches of daylight streamed through the holes in the chinking; but, then, it was a home for us. The cracks in the floor and chinking meant ventilation, and, as a consequence, health. If any of our old friends had happened along then, and showed any disposition to make fun of our building, there would have been a difficulty. Other people might not like chimneys of sticks and mud, but I did; this was home production, and partook of the rudely picturesque—was high art in fact. Once during the long stretch of watching for my family, I came over to the house from the landing. The moon was at its full, and our cabin stood out under it, in bold relief. It had never looked so beautiful to me before, and I then and there concluded, that, placed in a city beside the finest residences, it would excite more admiration from people of genuine artistic taste than the best of them. But if I felt proud of it that night, how much more did I feel so when showing Mrs. Harding and the children through it upon their arrival! There was our own room, and there, just adjoining it, was the children's; on the other side of the area was the guests' room, and just adjoining that the kitchen. I fancied Mrs. Harding looked a little dubious at this last arrangement. She had been ecstatic over the location of the children's room and our own, but now she only answered, very faintly, when I explained the purpose of the others, "Yes." Then it occurred to me that perhaps it was not quite the thing to have the guests' room so

near the kitchen; besides, come to think of it, what was the use of a guests' room any how? Should we ever have a guest down here? While this query was revolving itself in my mind, Mrs. Harding asked, a little faintly:

"What about a dining-room?"

"Why not use this?"

"That is what I thought;" and so it was settled, only she added, "we can consider this our '*multum in parvo*' room—parlor, guests' room, dining-room, etc."

Several busy days followed, with the opening of trunks and scattering of the bric-a-brac contents through the several rooms. There was also an abundance of home-made canned goods, with a coop of chickens, bought in the home market, and brought all the way down. The latter were beauties, and Mrs. Harding said, looking at them, not a little proudly:

"We will have our own eggs this winter."

There was a wild look in my eye after she had said this.

"What is the matter, John? Don't you approve of it?"

The look came from my having noticed that the chickens seemed generally to have long combs, and the doubt struck me—what if they are all roosters? A little further inspection proved them to be so, and then I let her know it, mischievously.

To say that Mrs. Harding was crest-fallen over this discovery but feebly expresses the situation.

"Never mind, dear, this is our unfortunate year;—we can't even buy a coop of chickens without being fooled."

CHAPTER LXXII.

I AM APPOINTED A JUDGE.

During the summer a vacancy, by death, had occurred in the judgship of the county. Owing to the fact that the native lawyers had all been in the Confederate army, it was found impossible to appoint any one among them who could take the necessary oath of office. So the vacancy had continued to exist until there was quite a clamor for a term of court. The agent of the Freedman's Bureau for the county, it seems, stated the case to the commanding General of the District, who, in turn, called the Governor's attention to the matter. A correspondence ensued beteween these officials on the subject.

As a remedy, the General suggested my name, which was accepted, and a commission was sent me through the Bureau agent, who explained to me the facts as above.

My first impulse was to decline the honor so unexpectedly conferred. But General Dobson advised differently, and finally I was persuaded to accept, but with the understanding that it was only until a successor could be found among the old citizens. The idea of occupying the position was, under the circumstances, repulsive to me, and I reconciled myself to it only upon the purely patriotic ground that, with the necessity that it should be filled, there was no one else available for the place, and a citizen of the county as I was, I felt it to be my duty, thus called upon, to respond. It was but a temporary duty—certainly some one would shortly be found who would take the judicial burden off my shoulders. Many Confederates were being pardoned at Washington just then, and it was not unlikely

that some of those in our county might have the fortune to receive this executive favor. Thus unexpectedly was a handle added to my name, and hence I should be no longer plain Mr. Harding.

The above are the facts in the case, and my friends in the North who have blamed me for accepting a judgeship so soon after my location in the South, and have, therefore, given me my judicial title grudgingly or not at all, will, I hope, now that they know the circumstances, think differently, regarding me rather as one who unwillingly undertook a disagreeable duty. If there are skeptics, I beg of them to read through this chapter in my experience, when I feel certain they will concede that my task was far from being either pleasant or free from personal danger.

Having accepted the trust, my purpose was to fulfill it, which I at once made preparations to do. General Dobson, reinvigorated by his sojourn in the North, willingly assumed the general plantation duties. Several days were, however, occupied in getting out of the harness myself, and familiarizing my successor with the same.

It was while I was thus making preparation that there came to my knowledge the unpleasant fact of bitter feeling among some of the old citizens of the county at my appointment. I had notified the sheriff to have the court-room ready for me on the following Monday, a week later than the date of my notice, and the information was circulated rapidly through the county. Visiting the post-office a day or two later, I found two anonymous letters, one begging me not to go out to the county-seat and hold court if I cared for my life, signed, "An Unknown Friend;" another saying: "Make your peace with your devil, you have no god, before you set up to be our judge; kaze you 'll never live through it." I stopped at the village store to make a small purchase, and the kind-hearted owner managed to drop into my ear, "Don 't undertake to hold court

now; I can't say more, but, believe me, I have reason to say this much." As I passed through the streets of the village it was manifest that I was an object of curiosity. "Southland" scowled at me, and a triumphant look flashed from his blood-shot eye, which I did not then understand, but which portended mischief to some one. Greatly to my surprise, further along at a turn in the levee, I was stopped by a prominent citizen, who said to me:

"I understand you are going out to the county-seat to hold court next Monday. I am opposed to you, but I don't want to see you killed, as I think you would be if you undertook it. You had best stay home and let the court go."

I thanked him for his words of caution, and heartily, too, because it was plain to be seen that he was in earnest and felt for me, but I added: "I have accepted this office —reluctantly, it is true, but as long as I hold it I am going to perform its duties, even if I am murdered in so doing."

"Well, Mr. Harding, that is courageous in you, but where is the use of your risking your life? At any rate, don't open court just now; may be after awhile you can do so safely."

"The law compels the judge to hold court monthly. The jail is full of prisoners waiting trial, and I must go out. Again I thank you for your warning," and, seizing him by the hand, I pressed it, saying: "It is something to know, as I have learned to-day, that there is a friendly voice to caution me when danger threatens," and, still suffering from my enervated condition, I felt a tear drop upon my cheek, at the discovery I had made—first, by the warning letter; second, by the verbal warning of the village merchant, and now by this one—that I was not entirely without friends.

The next day General Dobson visited the village and returned full of the impression that it would be dangerous for me to hold court now, and that I should have to

proceed with great caution. There had been personal warnings dropped into his ear. As he told me what he had heard, his face was gravely apprehensive. Nevertheless, my resolution remained unchanged.

Still later in the week, the New Orleans papers brought an account of the cold-blooded assassination of a new-comer like myself who had been appointed in a Louisiana parish to the precise position I had accepted! As I looked at the head-lines, the thoughts flashed through my mind—"only change the name and read your own fate. It is not too late to recall the appointment. But no—my hand is at the plow; to remove it is cowardice; I will die first. I accept this obituary notice, if needs be, as my own."

It was a double tragedy, as the sheriff, also a new-comer, and the judge were at the same time murdered, and that too, on their way to court! The account said there was no clue to the perpetrators. Nor did it express any indignation or regret over the bloody affair.

The reader may be certain that this terrible news was kept from my family, and I endeavored to betray no sign of excitement in consequence.

There were many things I did at this time which were unusual. Dobson had a pair of derringers, also of navy-sixes, which I borrowed. I closed up some unsettled accounts; made several memorandums and laid them away in a drawer, where any careless searcher might find them, directing certain thing to be done, "if any thing should happen to me;" that mysterious last will and testament came out from its hiding-place, and was carefully looked over. In view of our crop failure it was a ghastly joke. I added a codicil to the effect that, if I died while a resident of the South, it was my wish to have my remains taken to the North for interment. Both Dobson's derringers and navy-sixes came into use several times, ostensibly to bring down a bird, but really, I fear, to test my accuracy of aim. I did all these things, and, while silently pro-

testing in my mind that they had no significance, I yet felt they had.

Our county was partly hill and partly bottom-land—the latter bordering the Mississippi, the former in the rear of it, and beginning some ten miles back from the river. In the bottom region, the plantations being large, and the labor exclusively negro, the white people were few. The contrary was true of the hill region, and so, some time before the war, a contest had taken place for a change of location of the county-seat, which was then on the river. The vote showed the hill people to be largely in the majority. The county-seat was, accordingly, moved back twenty miles to the hills, where it remained at the time of which I write.

This region was inhabited by that class of people called, in derision, "the poor white trash,"—this because they owned but few or no slaves, and such work as was done they mostly did themselves. There was but little in harmony between the two regions. The hill people generally voted against secession, the river people for it. When the war came on the former, either voluntarily or through conscription, largely made up the rank and file of the Confederate army, while the latter either became its officers, or were exempted from service under a later Confederate law, which prevented the owner of a certain number of slaves from conscription into the army.

From my almost daily intercourse with the village merchant, while making our purchases, I got the impression that, to say the least, he did not dislike me, if, indeed, he did not entertain a kindly feeling toward me; and so one day, anxious to learn all I could of a class of people I was about to encounter for the first time, I said:

"Tell me what you know about the hill people."

"Come into the office," he answered, in an undertone,—after looking around among the bystanders inquiringly, as if observing who were there, so that he might make up his mind whether or not it would be safe to be closeted with

one of the "Yankee new-comers." Locking the door he began, with a something in his manner which caused me to feel that, for once, he was going to speak his mind, let the result be what it might.

He bit into his cigar savagely, and sent out great puffs of smoke from it; then he kicked out viciously at one of the mangy country curs, which was making a kennel of his counting-room, sending him howling into a corner on three legs, and then he said:

"If the river people indulged in champagne before the war, the hill people were not less devoted to whisky. It was drink in both cases, and drunkenness, too, though in the one case, the victim may have fallen more often into a bed of luxury; in the other, more often into the first fence-corner.

"If a personal difficulty arose, the code duello may have been invoked to settle it with the first class, but the other also had a remedy—warning and shot being almost simultaneous with the offense.

"These hill people are woefully isolated. There is in their lives all that may be conceived of remote frontier experience. There are bears, deer, in fact all sorts of wild and savage game, in their woods. Take your best cultivated city man," continued he, "and give him fifteen years of this experience, and you will find that he has lost most of his former identity—not only that, but he has gained most of the characteristics of his wild surroundings. Give a man a life of it and what do you find?"

"Are they a laborious people?" I asked.

"Yes; they work some. They need money with which to purchase ammunition to kill game and end personal quarrels, to buy whisky, tobacco, some coffee and sugar, a little clothing—jeans, cottonades, and kerseys,—and play poker in a retail way."

"What do you mean by 'poker in a retail way?'" I asked, amused.

"I mean small games—five cents ante with twenty-five cents limit, for instance. Neither books, magazines or newspapers are in demand out there, unless used as wadding for their guns—because tow is scarce, and then paper covered with printing will do, though there is something about their manner which says they would prefer the paper without the printing on it, as printer's ink fouls their gun-barrels.

"There are exceptions among these people—just about as gold is exceptionable," he added with a smile; "but where there is little difference in their mode of existence, the people themselves must be generally alike. It is not living out there, as life is understood where you came from, but simply existence.

"Just now there is one point on which the hill and river people are united—hatred to the Yankees. This is one of the results of the war.

"The beliefs of the hill people are sincere. In this respect they are vastly different from their more intelligent brothers, the river people. Convince a hill-man that a certain thing is right, or true, though it may be entirely different from what he had hitherto thought, and he will adopt it. Thus, with terrible prejudices, they may be said to be a plastic people. The man that one moment they would put a bullet through, because of a belief that he was in some way their enemy—and this being their idea of the way to rid themselves of enemies—once undeceive them, and the next moment they will take him to their hearths and shower upon him the best their homes afford.

"In the nature of things, with the same opportunities to do so, these untamed people will absorb the civilizing influences of the North much sooner than the river people, and I sincerely believe that the great hope for the near future of this country is through them.

"Some one has said of the upland people: 'They are like the acid in photography: turn it loose and it will either injure or destroy whatever it comes in contact with. Put

it to its appropriate use, and what a beautiful picture it assists to produce.' I suppose the parallel is that these hill people, without proper influences, are the acid turned loose, but under proper influences they would make the best of citizens.

"The prejudices engendered by slavery will only entirely disappear with the disappearance of the generation in which slavery lived. These hill people, being only under its influence to a small degree, rather suffering from its example of making white labor ignoble, will soon find out that, if any thing, they were relieved by its abolition, hence the small grains of prejudice that now exist in their minds will be replaced by feelings of gladness that an institution which made them 'poor white trash' is dead; and there will naturally grow up a kindly feeling toward the government and people who accomplished this for them. In slavery times unquestionably white labor was a disgrace here. In time this will all be changed, now that slavery is abolished."

The village merchant had entirely opened up his thoughts to me. He had never before seemed to have any opinions, but the fact was that, like so many of his class, he was wearing a mask which, lifted, disclosed a man of decided ones. I thanked him sincerely for the insight he had given me, and told him that I had never dreamed that he was so close an observer. I was strongly inclined to ask him if he thought the day would ever come when his class would assert themselves in the South, but upon second thought I felt that he had already given me so much of his confidence that it would not be kind to press him further at that time. I mounted my horse and rode slowly home, thinking: "Out into this hill region I must go to hold court with all my Yankee odor about me. What is to be my fate? Will these hill people give me time to get acquainted with them, and so, may be, teach them to think well of me? or will they shoot me on sight?"

The sun had sunk to rest when I wound my way out of the village. There was our first home, and in the twilight it had the silence of death. Why did I gaze at it so long, unless for the thought which came into my mind, "Will I ever see it again?" The full moon came up, a little further on, its face strongly shaded with red, and instead of questioning, as was my wont, what sort of a morrow it promised, there fell from my lips the exclamation: "There is blood upon it."

At one of the river landings I passed, there was something white glittening in the moonlight. Anxious to divert my thoughts from their gloomy channels before reaching home, I rode out to see what it was, and found a tomb-stone, freshly landed from a down-river boat! At this time a party of government employes were in the neighborhood, engaged in disinterring the remains of Federal soldiers from those great grave-yards, the Mississippi levees, for transfer to the national cemeteries, then being established; and there, on the side of the levee, on my route, was a great pile of coffins, either filled or to be filled, and there were the gaping pits strewn along my path. There, also, were the untouched mounds, showing the work of disinterment unfinished. Then I came upon a pack of hungry dogs of the neighborhood, feeding upon the carcass of a mule, passed the buzzard's-roost in the dead tree, and so reached home, sadly wondering why it was that upon this particular night I had to travel through such scenes as I have just described.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

HOME FROM THE VILLAGE.

If reminders of death attended my ride home from the village, they vanquished upon my arrival there. Two pairs of chubby arms encircled my neck as I stepped upon the gallery, and there also was Mrs. Harding, claiming her share of the welcome. Kisses greeted me from those sweet lips of mother and children. The sky cleared at once, and for the time being I forgot about the blood on the moon, or any thing else ominous, in the bright cheer of our log-cabin.

"Why are you so late, John? I have worried, fearing something had happened to you," said Mrs. Harding, tenderly.

"No especial reason, my dear."

And then it occurred to me that I had best give her a little suggestion of the situation, whereupon I corrected my reply:

"Oh, yes, there was; I had quite a long interview with the village merchant."

This statement had sobered my face, and Mrs. Harding asked, a little anxiously: "Any bad news?"

"Nothing very particular. He told me what he knew about the hill people I have got to visit next week; and, by the way," approaching more nearly the plain truth, "there is right smart talk of danger to me, if I go out there; but I'm going, nevertheless."

"Why do you go, John?—why not resign the place? There is danger enough here, without encountering it out there."

"Well, darling, it is a duty that has presented itself in my pathway. I have lifted it upon my shoulders, and I could never look my family in the face if I put it down now. You had better have my dead body, if it comes to you through the discharge of duty, than the cowardly wretch I should be if I shunned it because it was fraught with danger. It was dangerous to be a soldier, but where would our government be now but for its soldiers? We are fighting now in a different way, and he that is in the contest, and shirks his duty, is a coward. But enough of this. I am hungry for our evening rubber of cribbage, and, besides, I don't want any gloomy thoughts in this paradise, which you and the boys have made for me. If it is all dark on the outside, let it be bright in here." This last utterance filled Mrs. Harding's face with joy, and she replied :

" It shall always be a bright place for our papa—shall it not, boys?" And there was a " Yes, mama," from the oldest, with a " 'Es, mama," from the little parrot brother.

Then, while the lamps were being turned up, to make it brighter, and the coals on the hearth stirred, to bring out their lovely glow, and Mrs. Harding was arranging for our game, the boys grouped themselves at my knee, and told me what a time they had had to-day, in breaking their yoke of calves ; how, becoming thirsty, they had run the sled into a pond of water, and upset themselves, and there near the fire were the drying clothes as proof. The eldest one showed the sore finger he had for the day's work, and the little parrot held up one of his tiny ones, declaring he had a " sore fin'er, too." And so in this prattle of their troubles, my own sank deeper into temporary oblivion. And when Mrs. Harding said the cribbage was ready, I had come to feel that the whole world was bounded by the four walls then inclosing us, and that it was a very happy one, too.

Scarcely was the cribbage over before two small sleepy

faces presented themselves for the good-night kiss; a little later, "Spare my papa and mama," was part of what they had been taught to say; and as the words fell on my ear to-night, there arose in my mind the question, "Will this petition be answered?"

Two drowsy voices called out from their nest, bringing my thoughts back from their gypsying: "Good-night, papa."

"Good-night, darlings; pleasant dreams."

"Pleasant dreams," answered one.

"P'esant d'eams," echoed the other, almost inaudibly, as sleep was taking him in its arms. This last was too much for me, so there was a rush to the bed-side, and more hugging and kissing, until the mandate of the little one came forth: "Do way, mama and papa; I want to do to s'eep," when I reluctantly stole out, and the angels began their watch.

As I walked back, after saying the last good-night, the loose boards rattled under my feet, but in my happy mood I seemed to be treading on Turkish carpet. My eyes rested on the rude wall of logs only to transform them into costly wainscoting and fresco-work; and there, by my side, was Mrs. Harding, needing, as I thought, only wings to be an angel. There was no dragging on of time under this lotus influence. Indeed, I felt that the moments were passing by only too swiftly. And soon, my wife following the example of the children, I was left alone with my thoughts.

There was the chirp of the cricket on the hearth, the ticking of the clock, the occasional growl of the faithful watch-dog, the hardly audible breathing of the three quiet sleepers—no other sound greeted my ear. I looked up among the rafters, and thought I saw a huge diamond hidden away there, but a second look showed it to be a star shining through a crevice in the roof. I opened the door

stealthily, and crept out upon the gallery, to see what the night promised.

The moon was high in the heavens, shining now with a white light. There was not a cloud to be seen, and the whole aspect of the night was assuring, thus strengthening the pleasant inspiration of the evening in-doors. I said to myself: "There is no harm in a region that can produce so beautiful a night as this," when "whoop! whoop!" from an owl on the roof over my head, fell like a dirge upon me, and I hastened in, hurried to bed, and covered my ears, to shut out the doleful sound that was rapidly destroying the delightful state of mind I had previously secured.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

I START OUT TO HOLD COURT—AND WHAT COMES OF IT.

At last the hour arrived when I must say good-bye to my family, and go out to fulfill my official duties. I had thought the matter all over. If I were to be murdered, it would most likely be in the low swamp region, about ten miles back from the Mississippi, which divides the hills and the river. This was neutral ground, and the deed being done there, the hill people could charge it upon the the river people, and *vice versa*, and no one but those in the conspiracy would know the guilty parties.

They would expect me along Monday morning, I thought, and be in ambush, awaiting me. Why not flank them by going out Sunday afternoon? I could not think if I reached the county-seat in safety, there would be any great danger for me. But, no, I would not try to shun my fate by stealing out a day in advance. Having resolved to

undergo the ordeal, I must take no step that would show the white-feather. If I passed through it with my life, it must be with head erect; if not, my fate must be met with a brave front. One thing I would accomplish, if I died for it—my courage should be acknowledged.

The worst-situated man has always something in his favor; to me this was the animal I was to ride. I felt certain that if I were ambushed,—and my belief was that this was the way in which I was to be attacked, if at all—and if I were not killed or seriously wounded at the first volley, and before I could place my would-be murderers behind me, I would be in a measure safe. My mare had great speed, wonderful endurance, was as quick as a flash, and I felt that we could just shoot away from our pursuers. If I do not stop here I shall say too much of this wonderful brute—not more than she deserves, for that would be impossible; but I might weary the reader. Her name should have been "Invincible," but, instead, it was simply "Kitty."

For several days before my departure she received the closest attention as to feed and grooming—so much, indeed, that Mrs. Harding declared herself jealous of my devotion to her; and whenever there was any question as to my whereabouts, it was solved by finding me at the stable.

When Kitty was brought out for starting, she would have made the eyes of Rosa Bonheur twinkle. What strength of loin she disclosed, and how the cords stood out upon her shapely, unblemished limbs. There was a look in her eye which said: "Never fear; we 'll be enough for them to-day, master."

When I have said that a spectator would not have been likely to remain unmoved at my parting with my family, I have said enough.

As to my equipments, it is, also, enough to say that, save the derringers which had found their way into the side-pockets of my coat, every thing else, including the navy-

sixes, were in the saddle-bags under me. And so, going out to administer the law with concealed weapons, I became the law-breaker.

A turn in the levee, half a mile off, showed Mrs. Harding and the children still on the gallery. Fluttering handkerchiefs telegraphed a last good-bye, and then I passed out of sight.

I was due at court at ten o'clock, and so I had left home just as the sun was showing himself over the woods. There was the customary coolness of this gulf-region in the atmosphere, and Kitty swept along as if there was only a feather on her back. But the time for the push had not yet come, and so I held her in. To test her I jumped a couple of ditches, and then, seeing a five-rail fence along the road-side, I made a dash for it, and she vaulted it without hesitation, or apparently great effort. How proudly I patted her neck, telling her to try it again, and get back into the road. How willingly she obeyed. Thus I rode on, jumping several good-sized logs, dashing into and through some thickets which, from the outside, seemed impenetrable. Whatever I undertook to do, a slight pressure of the spur was all that was needed to send my mare to its successful accomplishment. I felt confident that I could dodge a bullet, if one should be sent after me. Yes, but could I dodge a volley of them?

Passing through the village, I espied a party of the "mischievous boys" staggering along from their night of drunken debauch. Southland was not of the number. There were others also missing. Should I find them further along? The air of the village seemed charged with bar-room odors. The roofs of the houses, as well as every thing else, were wet, as if the town were in tears. And, horrors! there a little further on in the road, lay a negro man with a hole in his temple, and the blood still slowly oozing from it, showing that he had only been dead a short time. Hanging over him, as if contemplating a feast, was a vil-

lage cur, and up in a tree, near by, was a flock of buzzards. Kitty shied from the dead man, and snorted as she smelled the blood, rushing forward as if anxious to hurry her master and herself away from the terrible spectacle. Here was surely death in our path. Was there more of it to come?

Getting into the country again, the scenes had a quieting effect. There were the cotton-pickers at work, songs meanwhile falling from their lips. The rabbits were busily hunting their morning meal, with bird and insect life every-where. Then a proud deer, with head erect and broad antlers, crossed the road in front of me; and then some wild-turkeys flew from their feeding up into the trees, and looked down upon me. Thus there was tempting work for my navy-sixes, but the mood was not in me to try it. This large game warned me that I was nearing the point where I might expect trouble. Soon the low ground was unmistakable. There were the marks of the annual overflows high up on the trees; there were the mud chimneys of the cray-fish, and the cypress-knees, serving the purpose of lungs, and over all was the dense growth of moss, which one never sees without thinking of grave-yards.

At sight of these, I felt my heart throbbing more quickly, but, as I drew the reins more firmly, I saw with pleasure that my hand was steady, showing that I had not lost confidence in myself.

The road was but little more than a pathway, following a tortuous course through the woods, so that if I encountered an ambush it would most likely be at a sharp turn, and thus with scarcely any warning. I had put my noble mare down to her best work, which, in spite of my apprehensions, was exciting my admiration, when she came to a sudden halt by a vine hanging low across the path. Quick as thought I turned her to one side, laying my body upon her neck, while she, understanding what was needed, stooped simultaneously with me, and thus I passed under

it successfully. Looking back, as I shot onward, the glance I had was enough to make me think that the vines had been purposely pulled down, and a crackling sound, showing that something was moving near the spot, convinced me that there was an enemy in the neighborhood, and that I had just passed his first trap. One more chance for my life, I thought, but I felt also a certainty that there was trouble ahead. How I thanked my mare for that intelligent act of hers in getting under the vine. I told her so, patting her on the neck. She moved along at wonderful speed. If it had been a straight road I might have defied my enemies, but, crooked as it was, I was constantly presenting a broadside for assault. How I used my eyes! They must have flashed fire,—now peering ahead; now glancing on one side, now on the other. If I could only have looked every way at once, so as to know which way to dodge!

There was another sharp turn in the road, as near as I could estimate, a mile further on from the first trap. Suspicious of these turns, I looked sharply in that direction. There was need of this. Right across the road, not less than four feet high, was a matted growth of vines, and there was the freshly-torn appearance of the woods, showing that it had just been prepared. I laughed at the obstacle, and my now foaming steed went over it as readily as if there was nothing in the way. I knew she would do this, so, beyond lifting the reins and giving her the spur, I took no heed of it, devoting myself to watching the thick undergrowth on either side to see if I could espy an enemy.

I had now a derringer in my hand, and it was no longer a concealed weapon with me. I had a glimpse of certainly two, and I thought three men, as I flew on, the cowards stealthily making toward the trap, with guns in their hands. They were masked, and so unrecognizable. They were behind me, and so in a measure harmless.

A few rods further I heard a rustle in a thicket near the road, and, looking towards it, saw three mustang ponies, saddled and bridled, tethered there. They were doubtless the property of the men behind. I had passed the second ambush in safety. Were there more to come? On and on I flew, my mare's nostrils distended, and her sides rapidly swelling and falling under the mighty effort she was making, my eyes strained in every direction. I roused up, as I went on, several of those gloomy reminders of death, buzzards; also those emblems of innocence, a doe and her fawn. Thus there were sunshine and darkness in my path.

I realized that every leap of my mare carried me so much nearer to safety or further danger, and then my heart sank within me when I thought that this terrible gait could not be continued much longer. But I also knew, from the distance I had come, that it would not have to be. This thought encouraged me, when suddenly another turn in the road was disclosed, and there, half visible ahead of me, were the dread enemy! There were no vine-obstacles this time, but a party of fiends, mounted and armed! Oh, God! I here thought, if I can only pass them—if I can only put them behind me! I looked down at my spur and the mare's side; there was blood upon them, but, notwithstanding, I struck the spur again into her side, and how she responded to my will!

There was a rush in the woods as I swung around past the enemy, and—bang! bang! fell upon the air, and then a volley of musketry followed. The bullets whistled around me, and a stinging sensation in the hand which held the reins warned me that I had been struck. Kitty shook her head viciously, which, terrible to contemplate, caused me to fear that she too was wounded; but as she continued to move steadily under me, I concluded that, if wounded at all, her hurt was not serious.

Good!—glorious! I had passed the enemy! This was

unquestionably the final assault. My foes were in the rear. I looked back for the double purpose of seeing if there were any blood-marks on my mare, and to learn what the enemy were doing. I could see no such marks, but the enemy were in full pursuit, strung out behind me. They wore masks on their faces. I gave them a shot with my derringer, and shouted back to them: "Come on, you cowards!—catch me if you can!" Looking ahead again, I saw blood running down the side of Kitty's head from her left ear. I leaned forward in my saddle, and, examining it as best I could, with the speed she was making, I found a bullet had passed through the upper part of the ear. Thus the extent of damage done was this, and a ball through my hand, which was bleeding profusely.

Putting the empty derringer back into my pocket, I took out my handkerchief and tried to stop the flow of blood with it. The wound was almost in the wrist, and in close proximity to the pulse artery; indeed, I feared it might be the pulse artery itself. I did not seem to be able to stop the flow, and I felt there was danger of my bleeding to death. I looked back again, and there were the enemy still in pursuit, though falling behind. They were firing shots at me at frequent intervals, but all falling short of the mark. I could plainly see that they were applying spur and whip in their frantic effort to lessen the space between us. Whether it were fancy or not, I am not certain, but there was a striking resemblance to Southland in one of the party. As nearly as I could count them, I made out seven of these brave, chivalrous Southerners. There they were, growing smaller and smaller as I looked at them.

I felt safe now—my mare having no serious injury, there was no longer any doubt of my escape. But my still bleeding wound caused me some fear. What with hers and my own, but principally my own, the mare was streaked with blood, and I found myself growing weaker.

But my druggist knowledge came into play to save me. I had a flask of whisky in my saddle-bags, the cork of which I took and cut into halves. This gave me two pieces, flat on one side, and oval on the other. The ball had passed through the hand. I placed the oval face of the cork across the wound on either side, strapping the pieces down with my handkerchief, thus arresting the severe flow of blood. Then giving the flask a strong pull, I poured the rest over the mare's head and neck, throwing some into her nostrils as a tonic. Thus playing the surgeon for myself, while still engaged in my race for life, I at last arrived at a point where I could see the county-seat in the distance, and, fortunately, at a small running stream. I sat there upon my foaming, panting steed for some time, and listened to see if I could hear any sound of my pursuers. I could not. I did not think it at all likely that they would continue their pursuit of me into the village. They had, no doubt, ere this turned back. The mare was famishing for a drink, and come what might I would take the chances of giving it to her. She that had done so much for me deserved all at my hands! After she had finished drinking, still hearing no sound of coming horses, I concluded to dismount and wash off the blood from Kitty and myself, so that I should be more presentable before entering town. This I did, and then rode into the village. Looking at my watch, I found it only eight o'clock. I had certainly made a quick trip.

While riding through the main street, I decided not to speak a word of my morning's experience. My wound should be understood to be simply a sore hand. I had examined Kitty's wound again at the stream, and found the bullet had passed through the upper part of her ear, leaving only a small hole that would not be likely to excite suspicion. I felt devoutly thankful to the Almighty for having spared my life. There was also a feeling in my heart for the brave mare—I felt that, notwithstanding

my needy condition, the amount of the Hebron indebtedness would not buy her. In fact, I then felt, I was amply repaid for all I had suffered in the South in the possession of her. This might all be very foolish, I thought, but, nevertheless, I felt it. Think of the gauntlet she had run for me, and then say if it was really foolish. She had enabled me to place at defiance the devilish machinations of my would-be murderers; and I felt that if I could look into the black hearts of the conspirators who had lain in wait for me, while I should still find hatred, there would also be respect, in that they had found a new-comer who, when he accepted a trust, was determined to fulfill it.

It is said of the Southern people that, when once they find what they consider a courageous man, they are disposed to let him alone. The hope for my future safety was, that this morning's experience would convince them that I was not lacking in courage.

CHAPTER LXXV.

I HOLD COURT.

ARRIVING at the village, I learned, upon inquiry of a bystander, where lawyer Whitely lived, and, riding directly there, I found him at home. I had always heard of this gentleman as being conservative in all his views, rather the leading citizen of the village, and a warm friend to the immigration of our class. He gave me a hearty welcome, and I passed a great deal of the spare time during my ten days of court in his society. More than any man I had met since my residence in the State, he made sentiment himself, instead of allowing the sentiment of others to control him. Inasmuch as he fraternized with me, it did not seem

disreputable for others of the hill-people to do so, and, for the first time in my experience, I had the pleasant sensation of finding myself, in some sense, welcome, and not, as always before, merely tolerated. It was clear from this that my class could make headway among these people much more rapidly than among the river people.

There was one feature of my arrival which impressed me as suspicious. No lawyers came out from the river on that first Monday, but the next day they were there in a body. Was it because, for some mysterious reason, which they understood, they did not think any court would be held; but found, on Monday, later in the day, that they were mistaken? Who knows!

On the faces of many of the people present at the opening of my court, there was an expression of great surprise, and I also marked some scowls, as an off-set to which there were a few pleasant faces. I was a great curiosity, and had to undergo considerable staring. My bandaged hand was looked at not a little suspiciously.

One or two ugly episodes occurred. When my stay was about half through, I was standing in the midst of a crowd of people in the court-room, chatting with one of them, while waiting for the moment to arrive at which to open court. Chancing to glance across the court-room, my eye caught that of Whitely looking at me with an expression of most intense pain and apprehension on his face, and beckoning me. At the same time I heard a noise, and then a movement with shuffling of feet, in my rear. Turning quickly I saw some men carrying a struggling fellow off, and trying to take from him a huge knife.

"What is the matter?" I asked of Whitely, who by this time had made his way over to me.

"Matter!" said he; "that man was about to plunge his knife in your back, and would have done so if his blow had not been arrested."

"Who is he?"

He gave the name of a man I had often heard of, and who it was known had committed more murders than he had fingers and toes. I afterwards heard that he had come to town with the avowed intention of murdering "that d—d Yankee judge," and he said he was going to get good pay for it, too.

The wretch was so near doing his work that I remembered, after it was over, having felt a pressure on my back which I believed was the knife. When I went to my room, this impression was verified by my finding a slight cut in my coat.

"You had a narrow escape," said lawyer Whitely, his face still pallid.

"Yes, indeed, it seems so," I answered, feeling profoundly thankful at my escape.

Then I took my seat upon the bench, and held court during the afternoon, feeling dazed at the dreadful experiences I was encountering. That night, when I thought it all over in the quiet of my room, and in connection with my remarkable escape in reaching the county-seat, I came almost to feel that I bore a charmed life.

The second episode was as follows: There were some enumerations being made under the auspices of the Freedman's Bureau. The enumerators, who were new-comers, were in session in one of the rooms below the court-room. They were not likely to have sufficient blanks to finish their work. This they knew before they came out, and so it was arranged that the agent of the Bureau should send more upon their arrival, daily expected, from New Orleans. The blanks gave out before the new supply came. It was noised around that it was all a "Yankee trick" which would result in the people not getting a fair enumeration.

This suggestion was no sooner started than it spread like wild-fire. An angry crowd began assembling at the door of the office, with threats to pull out the "Yankee wretches" and hang them to the first tree. I heard the

tumult in the midst of the session of my court. Pretty soon lawyer Whitely, who had left the court-room when the noise commenced, came back, his face white with excitement. He whispered in my ear the nature of the trouble, saying:

"You had better assemble a *posse* to maintain, if possible, the peace. There is terrible excitement below over the non-arrival of the blanks. I fear the result. When will the blanks come?" he added, half to himself, looking out of the window impatiently. I was proceeding to make a list for a *posse*, at the same time apprehensive as to whether my mandate, or that of the mob-court, would be heeded, when a shout below announced that something unusual had occurred. Whitely hurried out to see what it was. Though absent but a moment, it seemed an age. He returned with the grateful information that the messenger had just arrived with the blanks, and that no further trouble need be apprehended.

I have always thought that but for the opportune arrival of the messenger, this would have been my fatal day. A good deal of drinking had been going on in spite of my order to close up the drinking-shops, and if the blood of the poor, innocent enumerators had been shed, the mob would never have rested until they had taken my life. As it was, while the riot was brewing, one of the enumerators was struck in his side with the point of a bayonet, put through the open window, and the crowd seemed bent on worrying their victims to death.

In the afternoon of the last day of court one of my new-found friends came to me and said in an undertone: "Don't sign your docket to-night. Let it be understood you'll sign it to-morrow, before you leave for home. Come out to my house and stay all night. Don't tell any one where you are going, though. I mean what I say," said he, significantly.

"Thanks; I will accept your kind invitation with pleas-

ure." Accordingly, after court, I mounted Kitty, with my outfit, and proceeded as I had been directed. I had no difficulty in finding the place, but it would be impossible to describe my surprise at what I found there. It was a family consisting of husband, wife and two daughters, who had never seen the North, or scarcely ever, they said, met Northern people, and yet, so far as I could see, they had not the shade of a prejudice against them.

I found on their table Harper's Weekly, with Putnam's and Harper's Monthlies. There were copies of these for several consecutive months, indicating that the family were subscribers. I found a piano, though this was not so strange, and choice music, including among the patriotic airs "Star-Spangled Banner," "Yankee Doodle," and "The Bonnie Blue Flag." There was choice bric-a-brac scattered about, with fine specimens of embroidery partly done. What did it all mean? Here was a family exclusively Southern, with whom I harmonized as if they had mingled always in Northern circles. I did not understand it then; I do not now exactly, and never shall, quite. I remember very distinctly to have had this delightful experience,—there was singing, reading and discussion for an evening that ran on until midnight, but which did not seem to occupy an hour. All this I will make oath to as having occurred, but how it could be, considering the antecedent surroundings of this family, was a marvel.

Colonel Edmunds—their name was Edmunds, and their plantation was called Edmundston—did more than I have indicated. He did not, in so many words, tell me it was arranged to murder me as I returned home the next day, nor did he, perhaps, intimate that;—just what he did was to give me definite instructions as to my course homeward.

"There is no need of your returning to the county-seat to sign your docket. You can do that when you come out to your next term. You must go back to the river by the upper road, and thus avoid the route you came before."

He seemed to lay great stress upon the last sentence, and I thought his eyes said, "You know what I mean."

Did he indeed know of the ordeal I had passed through at that time? The matter had not been spoken of, so far as I knew, and to all appearances it was not known.

There must have been an expression of doubt in my face, for my host added:

"Excuse me, sir, but I have the best of reasons for advising you to take this step. The upper road to the river is one seldom traveled, and you are sure,"—he said "sure" with emphasis,—"not to be at all interrupted in your journey." I had intended from the first to adopt his suggestions, whatever they might be, but now I was more than ever convinced that I ought to do so.

"I will certainly take the route you suggest, and feel more grateful to you than I can tell for your advice," I said warmly.

The next morning I was off in good time, and without interruption reached the river.

It so happened that at the point where I came out there was in progress some sort of a public meeting. It must have been semi-political in its character. There were a hundred or so of white people assembled around the speaker's stand, with several hundred negroes on the outskirts. As I rode up the speaker was actually engaged in an attack upon me, telling how I had come into the country, and was now undertaking to rule them. He saw me, and his countenance expressed the utmost surprise, so much so that he stopped his harangue. At this his audience, who had been applauding him, at least the white portion of them, turned around to see what was the matter, and saw me. A number of them were from my part of the county, and knew me at a glance. If I had been one from the dead the expression on their faces could not have been more marked. There was at once surprise, consternation, indignation and chagrin expressed, and, watching them closely

as I did, I saw significant looks pass between them. My name flew from lip to lip, and soon every one knew who the stranger was who had so quietly and unexpectedly ridden into their midst. I knew then just as well as afterwards, when it was told as a fact, that I had again flanked my enemy; that it was supposed I was then on the route I went out by, and that there was an ambush ready for me this time that I could not pass. Need I say that, terrible as the situation was, looked at as a whole, I yet felt a sense of triumph on this particular occasion. No doubt in the crowd before me were many of the plotters of my destruction, and here I stood before them, having successfully passed through the fiery furnace their malice had prepared for me. My hand was still in a sling—their bullet had made its mark; and this, too, doubtless, told its story to some of those present. I felt, as I looked them squarely in the face, that I now had a mission here, not altogether in the accomplishment of the Dobson scheme. Then there came into my mind a terrible resolve—to try to perform it, even though its goal, as was not unlikely, should be my grave. With this resolve swelling my bosom, how immeasurably I felt myself above the scared, outwitted crowd about me!

I passed out of their sight on my way home. In course of time I reached the village landing. Here everybody knew me, and here again I read consternation, chagrin, surprise, and anger in the faces of those I met. I looked out for Southland and others of his party. They were missing!

The mare, from this on, scented her home, and what strides she made towards it! It brought back to my mind, for an instant, our memorable race through the camp of the enemy.

There, on the gallery to welcome me, were wife and children—and such a welcome! Then the whole story had to be told, and my now rapidly healing wound looked

after, tears dropping into it along with the healing lotion—the former I declared, laughingly, much more healing than the lotion.

I never mentioned the experience just described, outside of Hebron, and never heard it spoken of in the county. Evidently, if I did not care to expose it, the participants on the other side did not.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

RESULTS.

The history of one day's cotton-picking is the history of all, and so the months went by, with their daily receipts of the fleecy staple, until the first of December came, when the crop was declared gathered.

No ginning had been done, and so our entire yield lay up in the gin-house chamber, looking like an enormous snow-bank. I had no idea how many bales it would make, but one day, about the close of the picking, an old-time overseer chanced to be passing, and I asked him to make an estimate of it, which he was kind enough to do, placing it at two hundred and sixty bales. He said he could "estimate a pile of cotton within a few bales of what it would gin out."

This was a terrible fall from the Dobson estimate, and cotton was now down from a hundred and twenty to one hundred dollars a bale; but upon the whole, I felt relieved to think that we were likely to have so much. This would give us twenty-six thousand dollars, or nearly enough to make our second payment!

Thus relieved, as soon as the picking was over, we com-

menced ginning. With reasonable success, we could finish in five weeks, which would take us a week into 1867. It was sad enough to commence ginning on a two hundred and sixty bale crop, but soon the estimate was reduced sixty bales, and then sixty more, and so on, until the atmosphere around the gin-house became terribly dismal.

Finally, when the entire Hebron crop lay out in a row at the end of the gin-house, there were only sixty-five bales of it. Reader, that is all! My pen almost refuses to make the statement, but this is a true story, and I force it to the discharge of its task. To be exact about it, and to turn over this terrible leaf in our experience in a hurry, I will add that it brought, in money, sixty-five hundred and sixty-four dollars and twenty-seven cents, out of which came the cask of claret, with the bagging and ties, and the repair of the engine—in all about a thousand dollars.

General Dobson went to his log-cabin sick, and I to mine, sicker. There it was:

Promise—Dobson estimate, 900 bales, $120.....	$108,000 00
Realization, 65 bales.....	6,564 27

making the slight difference of 835 bales, amounting to $101,435.83; or, stated in round numbers, a discrepancy of over one hundred thousand dollars. To say the least, and indulging in a little sarcasm, the outlook was not promising. Many a time, for a good deal less, suicides have been committed. Not that I contemplated any thing of the kind, only the thought entered my mind, and I let this confession go out with the rest.

Then I asked myself: "Is this a legitimate enterprise?" Thinking it carefully over, there was but one response, and that was, "Yes." Then I again resolved to prosecute it, if my life was spared. But, of course, further means were required.

I still had resources in the North, but these I felt loth to

disturb, and so I concluded, if it were possible, to borrow the means necessary to continue the enterprise, as was the custom of the country, in New Orleans; having long since, in the case of the claret, persuaded ourselves to borrow money there for illegitimate uses, I felt that I should not hesitate to solicit it for legitimate uses.

I talked the matter over fully with General Dobson, and we agreed upon this programme. Beyond the ditching on the plantation nothing was doing at Hebron, or would be done, until we commenced the crop of '67. My health was now pretty thoroughly undermined. The recent blow from the final result of the Hebron crop, was so severe that, in connection with my shattered health, I did not seem able to rally.

General Dobson, in his capacity of physician, gave it as his opinion that a change of climate was necessary for my restoration to health. Where to go was the question. Crushed and broken as I was, I had no heart to face our friends in the North. It would certainly be necessary for me to go to New Orleans, to procure the proposed loan, and so, after fretting around several days, my voice growing weaker and my spirits more depressed meanwhile, I decided to take my family with me to New Orleans, and to reside with them temporarily on the shoal waters of the gulf, near that city, where we should find salt-water and sea-air, which Dobson said, above all things, I needed. I could not well bear the expense of such a journey, but much less could I bear the thought of leaving my family behind, with all their inhospitable surroundings. Besides, more than ever now, I needed Mrs. Harding's watchful care, and she herself was unwilling to let me go without it.

Nothing eventful occurred on our journey to the Cresent City. Anxious to secure the good effects of salt baths and breezes, we hurried through New Orleans, and at once located ourselves at one of the numerous gulf watering-places. After resting and recuperating, as I began to do

at once, for a week or two I visited New Orleans, to see what could be done toward making my needful financial arrangements.

Greatly to my disappointment I found a condition of financial distress, not second to my own, and I at once saw that relief from this quarter was out of the question. Nothing remained for me but either to abandon all further thought of continuing the enterprise, and return permanently to the North, as nine-tenths of the new-comers we found were doing, or to seek financial relief in the North. Still feeling strongly that the Southern country had a future, I resolved upon the latter course. I decided to do this in the face of the terrible prejudice I could see everywhere apparent toward every thing Northern. Nowhere else had I found this feeling more intensely bitter than in New Orleans, and the little watering-place on the gulf which we had made our temporary home, likewise evinced great intolerance.

The simple fact that we were new-comers condemned us. If, as a class, upon coming here we had espoused the "Southern cause," all would have been well with us. Occasionally one would do this, and it was astonishing to see how soon he lost his identity as a Northerner. But the Judases in this army of immigrants were few, and so the class was condemned.

I registered myself at the hotel in New Orleans, and at the watering-place on the gulf, as a resident of a Southern State. My swarthy face testified to the fact that I was this in fact. If I could have surrendered my manhood enough to have claimed an anti-bellum residence in some one of the Southern States, all would have been well with us. I could have gone in and out on my daily walks with no one to molest or make me afraid; so long as the antecedents of our residence were unknown, I did so.

Whether sitting in the rotunda of the St. Charles hotel, at New Orleans, or on the veranda of the gulf hotel, tak-

ing in great breaths of salt air, feeling my blood flowing faster through my veins, and enjoying the delightful sensation of returning health, the people around me talked freely. There was but one topic—abuse of the North. In the few days, while I was yet unknown, I heard all about the Ku-klux of the South; its murders were freely talked of, and with no more feeling than one would talk of the killing of so many swine. I met a new-comer whom I had known as a resident of the North. I heard some one at the hotel ask him from what State he came here.

"Missouri," he answered.

This made him a Southener at once, and was his pass.

I asked him afterwards what he meant by that statement.

"Do n't you know," was his reply, "that half the men living here, and professing to come from some one of the border States, either only passed through one of them, or at most spent a week or so there, as they came South to live, and this for the purpose of concealing the fact that their actual residence was in the North? It works splendidly."

"Where did you get that idea?"

"From an Indiana flat-boat man, before I came down. It's old, very old. 'Go to Kentucky,' said he to me, 'or any border slave State; take up your residence, even if you do n't stay longer than a day; then, when you 're asked where you hail from, and tell them a Southern State, you 'll be all right. It 's mighty seldom a flat-boat man hails from a free State. I know some of them who have farms in Indiana, and do all their business there, and yet take up their residence in Kentucky, so as to say, when they go South with their crops, that they hail from that State. What is true of the flat-boat man is true of all classes of laborers who go South for work."

Mrs. Harding and the children were, as Southerners at the hotel, declared by every body "just splendid," and

were quite sought after. A grand-looking lady at the St. Charles, in particular, was anxious that her little daughter should take as her play-mate our youngest, and she called at Mrs. Harding's room, where, the latter not being in, she left her lavender-scented card. Every thing was charming for us; but, alas! we were sailing under false colors, and could not stand it.

Reluctantly we decided to do so no longer—we felt that we were losing our self-respect. We had to listen to such dreadful tirades against the North, and Northern people, as became intolerable, and finally we let it be known that we were new-comers. Then the way the high-bred lady just mentioned pulled her little daughter away from her play-mate was a caution; and how she stormed at having called on "that Yankee woman"—was it not reported by that chatter-box, the hair-dresser?

"Gods," I exclaimed, when, after it was known we were new-comers, frowns met us where but yesterday we were greeted only with smiles, "what has the North, or what have Northern people done to be so mistreated?" and then, just as once before in my own case, distrust entered my mind—only for an instant, however—of that section which was being so terribly traduced. Then all the loyalty of my heart rose to the defense of that slandered section, and I looked squarely into the faces of those who were frowning upon us, as only a man can do when he is thoroughly conscious of being in the right; and, neither seeking nor avoiding the opportunity, I also told them of our beliefs, which were in no sense uncomplimentary to our birth-place, though perhaps not entirely politic for us.

The time came for me to make my trip to the North, for the purpose of raising the means necessary to continue our enterprise. It was decided that Mrs. Harding and the children should remain at the gulf watering-place during my absence, and I should pick them up on my return to Hebron. I hesitated much before leaving them behind,

but my trip with them all would have been very expensive, and I was really forced to do so. I found in New Orleans some old acquaintances, to one of whom I entrusted my family during my absence; I also prepared a cipher telegram to be forwarded to him and me if any thing unexpected should happen. Then came the good-by.

More than ever I felt I was leaving my family surrounded by enemies, but the case was desperate. I journeyed northward by rail, with a heavy heart.

Some days after my departure, greatly to the surprise of Mrs. Harding, our eldest son was invited to dine with a family of natives, where there was a house full of young girls, and one son nineteen years of age. I had never said much in the presence of my family about the state of feeling in the South toward Northerners, so Mrs. Harding had very little just conception of it, and not dreaming that the invitation to her son had any significance, desiring to add to the pleasure of the child, and avoid any sectional feeling, she gladly accepted the invitation for him.

He was treated with attentive hospitality, dined upon the fat of the land, and in every respect had an enjoyable visit. When he took his leave he was urged to be sociable.

The next evening, while the family were seated on the gallery, one of the elder girls called to invite him to join a party on the beach, for a moonlight boat-ride. It was arranged that he was to go immediately there, and she would follow. When he reached the beach, he found but one member of this pleasant family, and that the son, with some seven other boys, none younger than himself. As he stepped towards them in the twilight, he was confronted by one of the number with:

"Are you a Yankee? Where has your father gone?"

While these questions were being asked, greatly to the surprise of the boy, a second stepped up in his rear and dealt him a blow in the back which staggered him, knock-

ing his hat off, and, his tongue being between his teeth when the blow was given, his jaws came suddenly together, cutting it badly. A third kicked his hat, saying:

"You d——d little Yankee, we've got you now, and we propose to kick the breath out of you." Another blow on his back sent the poor, dazed, puzzled boy to the ground, and then the whole crowd of young Southerners commenced pounding and kicking him.

He shouted, "Help, help."

His mother still sat on the gallery, where he had, but the moment before, left her with joyous anticipations of the bright moonlight ride he was about to have on the gulf. Mrs. Harding's heart was swelling with kindly feeling for the people who were showering attentions upon her eldest, when his cry for help fell upon her ear. She immediately recognized his voice, and flew down the path half crazed at the, to her, terrible appeal. She was dressed in white, and as she rushed along, responsive to that heartrending cry, in the evening dusk, it was as the flitting of a spirit. There was in her mind the thought that her boy had fallen into the water and was drowning. That fearful cry for help certainly meant something. As she dashed on, it continued at intervals—only growing fainter, as if from weakness or being in some way suppressed. At last, breathless, she reached the beach. She saw a crowd of what appeared to be men apparently in a struggle, and from under them came up the suffocated cry for help. She rushed up to the chivalrous crowd, who, seeing her, desisted from their fiendish task. Then she saw her poor, beaten boy lying upon the ground. One of the Southern braves had a pistol in his hand. The crowd parted, and she raised her poor boy, taking him in her arms; they stood aghast at the spectacle of this enraged woman. The moon, shimmered across the waters of the gulf, lighting up her face, upon which were playing at once expressions of rage, consternation and joy. Then she said, as if she would have the

bitterness in her heart drop from her lips, and with withering scorn: "Is *this* Southern chivalry? I have read of it frequently, but this is my first experience with it." Then she added, as she pressed her restored boy to her breast: "God grant it may be my last experience with it." As she turned, with her disabled son on her arm, she looked into their faces, as they stood with open, speechless mouths and staring eyes.

The mother, sore at heart, the boy bruised in body and crushed in spirit at the terrible ordeal through which he had passed, slowly and sadly went back to their room. There was no more sitting on the gallery for that night. Reaching their room, mother and child fell upon their knees, and with her hands upon that swollen face, she offered up her thanks to God for the escape of her child. There was but little sleep that night in the chamber occupied by that unprotected mother and her two boys.

The following morning, the watchful eye of his mother noticed an expression on the injured boy's face, which boded mischief to some one. She called him to her side, and pressing him to her bosom, begged him to tell her what was in his mind.

"Mama," the manly little fellow answered, "I have been terribly outraged, and I feel, if I am to die for it, like having revenge. What an awful thing it was for that girl to toll me out last night into the clutches of those brutes. If I can catch one of them, and the largest one, too, by himself, either he must whip me, or I will whip him. Now, there, mama, you have it."

The mother used all her persuasive power upon her son to dissuade him from his intention, but to no purpose.

During the forenoon of the next day, while sitting in their room, a crowd of men stopped before their windows, and groaned in the most hideous manner, also calling out:

"Where's your protector?" "You 'd better keep close." "Andy Johnson 's on our side." "We 'll make it hot for

you here." "You 'd better make your Yankee hides scarce." "We 've got you spotted," etc., etc., until the air grew thick with their fearful yells and talk.

Mrs. Harding decided at once to send the cipher telegram to New Orleans, but not to her husband, her thought being that if she and her boys were in New Orleans they would be safe. Somebody had to take the telegram to the office, and tremblingly did Mrs. Harding place it in the hands of her eldest son, cautioning him to hurry there and back.

A careful observer would have detected an expression of joy on the boy's face when he started out. If this observer had watched him, he would have been seen hurrying to the office to deposit his message, with an expression of relief on his face when the task was done. Then, as he started back, there was firm determination pervading his every look and movement. As he walked down the street, he was evidently on the watch for some one, and several times it was noticeable that his right hand was clinched, as if ready to deal a blow. Not far from home, out on the beach, was a boy several sizes larger than himself. Glancing around, as he was constantly doing, his eye rested upon this boy. A gleam of vindictive joy shot across his face, and sooner than I can tell it, he was at his side.

"You are one of the wretches that attacked me last night. You called me a Yankee, and you kicked me, and I 'll show you that Yankees can fight, even if they are smaller than you." Then he jumped upon him, like an enraged tiger, and before he finished with him somebody had a black eye, bloody nose, and was yelling loudly, "enough," and it was not young Harding, either. The latter went home with a triumphant expression on his face, and told his mother what he had done.

"I should never have been satisfied with myself, mama, if I had n't got this opportunity to show I 'm not a cow-

ard." The boy was scolded by his mother; but as is often the case, I fear the reproof only came from her lips

That night, thanks to the kind friend who responded at once to Mrs. Harding's telegram, the family was safely sheltered in a private boarding-house at New Orleans, to await the return of Mr. Harding.

A week later found the latter and his family back at Hebron, where I will now leave them, hoping that the year 1867 will prove as fortunate to them as these pages show the year 1866 to have been unfortunate.

SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTER.

This narrative was prepared prior to 1876. It was then laid aside, where it has quietly rested, taking on coats of dust and cobwebs, and apparently abandoned to the ravages of nibbling mice and the slow decay of time. At last it leaves its hermitage to do its part in portraying the South at an important era in its history. To give the reader a glimpse of the present, so that he may judge the extent of the improvement, this brief supplement is added. The South of 1866 and 1880 is different. From the midnight darkness of a densely clouded sky as then, there are now stars to be seen. Largely have we got rid of the weeds in our fields. Would that I could say as much of those in our hearts and feelings. A good deal I can, however, say. We are growing more of everything than was grown before the war. The production of the greater part of the world's supply of cotton, both as to quantity and quality, as of old, rests with the South. Thus, and this time in no offensive sense, Cotton is again king. In view of this fact, and that, save in Texas, there has been no immigration into the South since the war (except my class, most of whom, as these pages indicate, fled from the country within the year), it is conclusive that the negro as a free laborer is a success; and I am pleased to say that such is the undisputed belief with the class of Southern people who have to deal with them. Nowhere else now is the feeling stronger than here that, in a business point of view, slavery was a mistake. There is a more substantial prosperity here now than before the war. Only a fraction of the millions of indebtedness that hung like a

pall over the South in 1861 has ever been paid; but, thanks to an elastic national bankruptcy law, the debts have been cancelled, leaving in some mysterious way, to a great extent, the lands in the same hands. Manufactories are springing up rapidly. There were no cotton-seed oil factories here before the war; there are none anywhere else now. A moderate percentage of the cotton grown is now manufactured at home. There being nothing to fear from runaway slaves, railroads are being built. The "mischievous boys" are disappearing, their dissipation giving them an early claim to that six feet of ground the heritage of all. Notably, Southland is dead. He learned to think more kindly of my class in the years that followed; and once when I was at the village, and he hungry, he borrowed a dollar of me; went at once to a Chinese restaurant, spent it for food, and thus gorged, hid himself away, where he was discovered the following day a corpse. General Parker, also, long since commenced his journey to that "bourn from whence no traveller returns," thus reducing the annual consumption of whiskey six barrels. Tyler, too, is of the past—gone to meet at the Judgment-day that brave Confederate officer whom he so foully murdered, as also a dozen others of his murdered victims. The village merchant finally learned that cash was better than credit; lacking it, he had to close his doors. They are open again now, this time on a cash basis. It is doubtful if the best Southerner in the land could purchase so much as a box of matches of him on credit. Nor does he now hesitate to speak out against the "mischievous boys," or to fraternize with the new-comers; nor is he by any means alone in this latter feeling. The negro has gradually worked his way up from the lower deck on steamboats, until now upon the later built ones he has a cabin of his own, above that of the "white folks," in which are to be found piano, silver-ware, and about the same cuisine as the white fellow-passengers below have. No legislation has accom-

plished this. It has simply grown out of the fact that the negro has the money to pay for such accommodations. He has not yet, however, gained access to the bar in the main cabin of steamboats. God grant it may be long before he does! He can, however, walk up to the clerk's desk "along of de white folks," and get his bill of lading for his cotton shipped to his merchant in New Orleans. It is sad to say that at the village landing the numerous bars, without an exception, are open alike to whites and negroes. The prejudices of the Southerner to renting the negro land, mules, etc., soon disappeared, and about the same percentage of them are getting along financially as are white people. As to education, nothing short of a compulsory system will answer the purpose, and this is true of both white and black. If the reader will recall Mr. Sinton's lovely home, he will understand what Hebron has grown to be. With prosperous crops, as soon as our plantation was redeemed of its weed-ridden condition, we throve, and the log-cabins made way for pretentious mansions; then rapidly came the needful surroundings, to make them cheerful and comfortable: so now, if needs be for us to spend the midsummer season at home, we can do so with pleasure. Most of the negroes referred to, as with us in 1866, are still our tenants. In many cases their woolly heads are now fleecy white, as ours is sprinkled plentifully with gray. We have all grown older fast, in the terrible ordeal of so-called Reconstruction, but which history will term Destruction. Ole Clara is married, this time "out ob de book," and, a little superannuated as she has grown to be, spends most of her time in religious duties. The devoted servant of Mrs. Dobson, the General has built her a cabin in which she can spend the balance of her days. The beautiful Mary and Jimmy are, as they long have been, a fixture on Hebron. Frances and Liss, who were once so vicious and wild, are now sober wives and mothers. The South of 1880 is more tolerant than the South of 1866. But

it has yet so much to learn on this score! There are portions of it now—a very few—where a Northerner, whatever his politics may be, is as highly respected as he would be anywhere in the North; but, generally speaking, any one inimical to the politics of this section is simply tolerated, and would receive a similar treatment to ours of 1866; and there are regions—alas! a great many—where his personal safety would be in question. Nearly everywhere the good element is under the domination of the "mischievous boys." Many times in my region have I thought that the former were on the eve of asserting themselves, only to be disappointed. Still, I can see that each year the good element is growing stronger, and the time *will* come when it will have the upper hand. God speed that day! Long since has the coarse display of pictures of Confederate generals ceased, and in their stead are to be seen the counterparts of pictures to be found in the North. Northern papers are now circulating generally in the South; Southern people are visiting the North, and through these instruments they are slowly learning that there are two sides to every question; and so the improvement goes on, it may be at a snail's pace, but be it remembered, given a number of years, a snail's pace means many miles!

These straws must satisfy the reader that something has been accomplished since the war. What more is needed to make the South as free as the North will come, and with it unexampled prosperity.

THE END.

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